CBCP: Some solons blocking Amla hiding dirty money

Story below, Col. 3

Bee Gees? No, veggies

DI LANG PAM BEAUTY... PANG CONCERT NA RIN KAMI!

LONDON—We all know vegetables not only make you healthy but make you look nice as well (cool cucumber slices to reduce those puffy eyes, remember?).

But a group from Vienna has found another use for vegeta-

BEE/ A4

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Edsa I on Feb. 25 non-working holiday

MALACAÑANG yesterday declared Tuesday, Feb. 25, a "special national holiday" to mark the 17th anniversary of the first Edsa People Power uprising. It will be a non-working day.

According to Proclamation No. 331, the public should be given the opportunity to "honor the memory" of the peaceful revolt that ended the 20-year Marcos

EDSA I/ A15

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph Thursday, February 20, 2003 ★★ 56 pages / 5 sections / vol. 18 / no. 74 P15 e: www.inq7.net

Clashes force 78,000 to flee homes

By Edwin O. Fernandez and Rosa-May V. de Guzman
PDI Mindanao Bureau

COTABATO CITY—Just as evacuees in Pikit, North Cotabato, are starting to return to their war-ravaged villages, relief officials are crying for help to address the needs of over 78,000 other people who have fled their homes in Maguindanao.

"The number of evacuees is increasing by the hour," said Bainon Karon, social welfare secretary in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

Most of the residents in 14 towns in Maguindanao have moved to safe grounds following last week's fierce clashes between government troops and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) rebels. The fighting broke out in Pikit and spilled to the neighboring ARMM provinces of Maguindanao and Lanao del Sur.

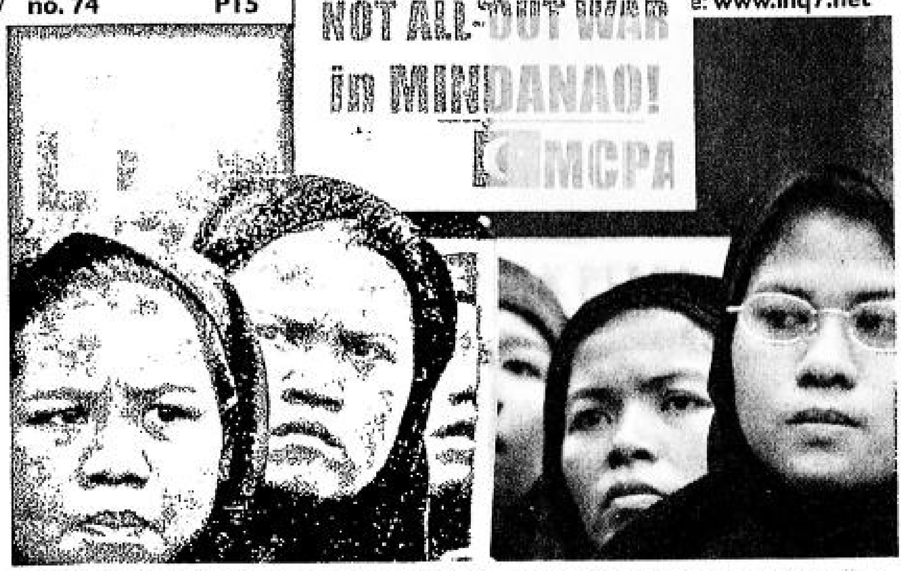
On Sunday, the military announced the capture of an MILF stronghold in the Buliok Complex in Pikit near the Liguasan Marsh after five days of clashes.

In Manila, President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday commended the soldiers for their "short and swift operations" as she unveiled plans to turn the Liguasan Marsh "from a bandit lair into a peaceful and bustling agricultural community."

The evacuees, numbering at least 60,000, could now go back to their homes "as operations wind down," the President said. "I am saddened by the displacement of peaceful families from their area, but sometimes this is the price we have to pay for long-term peace and order."

So far, Karon has placed the total number of refugees in Maguindanao at 78,162. Some of them came from the northern towns of Matanog, Barira and Buldon, and sought shelter in Parang

CLASHES/ A15



JOAN BONDOC

THE TROUBLES they have seen in their lifetime are etched on the faces of Muslim women who protest military offensives in their homeland at Camp Aguinaldo.

Abus 'to surprise' GIs

US wants special forces for combat

By Arlyn de la Cruz
Contributor

THE ABU Sayyaf is preparing a "welcome party" for American soldiers who will take part in the Balikatan 03-1 exercise in Sulu.

"We will welcome them in our little way . . . and that could be big," Abu Soliman, one of the top leaders of the Abu Sayyaf with a $5-million bounty on his head, said yesterday.

The American forces may be ready to party.

The United States is negotiating details of a major new counterterror operation against the Abu Sayyaf that could include involvement of US special forces in combat, American defense officials said in Washington Tuesday.

The officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity, believe they have new information showing a stronger link than previously believed between the Abu Sayyaf and the Jemaah Islamiah of Indonesia, a group believed to be responsible for the bombing of Bali in October that left some 200 people dead.

In a phone interview, Soliman warned of a "sure surprise" awaiting the American troops. He did not give details but said the group was prepared for any eye-to-eye combat with US troops, who are expected to take part in the military exercise starting Feb. 24.

"The facts of history is on our side and we don't mind being branded as terrorists," said Soliman, who intelligence reports say serves as the Abu Sayyaf's operation officer.

"In the Mindanao conflict, who is the real victim?" he said. Soliman is ad-

ABU/ A15

TWO PRESIDENTS PLUS ONE EDWIN BACASMAS

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and former President Fidel V. Ramos, honor another president, Amelou Benitez-Reyes who is installed Wednesday as the Philippine Women's University's 8th president at the Plenary Hall of the PICC.

Kids carry invisible wounds of war

"WHEN lives and properties are lost in wars, they are irretrievable. What should not be lost is the sense of hope that survivors, especially children, must have if they are to go on."

Dr. June Pagaduan-Lopez, director of the Balik Kalipay (Return to Happiness) Program in Pikit, North Cotabato, reported Wednesday on the "invisible wounds of war."

A psychiatrist, Lopez has been helping evacuees deal with violence. She said that the recent military operations against Moro rebels in Central Mindanao had traumatized poor communities already struggling with decades of armed conflict.

Villagers saw relatives and friends killed in fighting. Some fled soldiers and rebels, hiding in forests for days. Teachers reported that students' academic performance has dropped, many have quit school, aggressive and disruptive behavior is on the rise, and more children are engaging in violent games.

KIDS/ A15

100 poor nations to reject Bush war

KUALA LUMPUR—Except for a handful of countries like the Philippines, more than a hundred nations are preparing to deliver a resounding "No" to a US-led war on Iraq during the summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in Malaysia this week.

Most of the 115 NAM states carry little clout of their own, but they hope to add their official voices to those of millions of ordinary people around the world opposing US military action in Iraq.

Also attending the conference is Iraq, Washington's latest target following the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on US soil. In fact, all the three countries in US President George W. Bush's renowned "Axis of Evil"—Iran, Iraq and North Korea—will be there.

A longtime US foe from ideological battles past, Fidel Castro of Cuba, will also be at the summit when it gets under way on Monday and Tuesday. Preparatory meetings of senior officials and ministers begin today.

At the United Nations on Tuesday, na-

100/ A4

Acsa shouldn't expect apology from Palace

By Philip C. Tubeza and Dona Z. Pazzibugan

ACSA Ramirez should not expect an apology from President Macapagal-Arroyo despite being cleared by the Ombudsman of supposed involvement in a P431-million tax diversion scam last year.

At a luncheon yesterday in Malacañang, the President did not give reporters a chance to get her reaction to the Feb. 13 Ombudsman resolution saying that it was indeed Ramirez who had blown the whistle on the scam, and that she was not a party to it as charged by the

ACSA/ A4

US defends Agile program in RP: It is legal

By Cynthia D. Balana and Christine O. Avendaño

THE PRESENCE of the Accelerating Growth, Investment and Liberalization with Equity (Agile) program in almost all layers of the executive branch is legal and authorized by agreements between the Philippines and the United States.

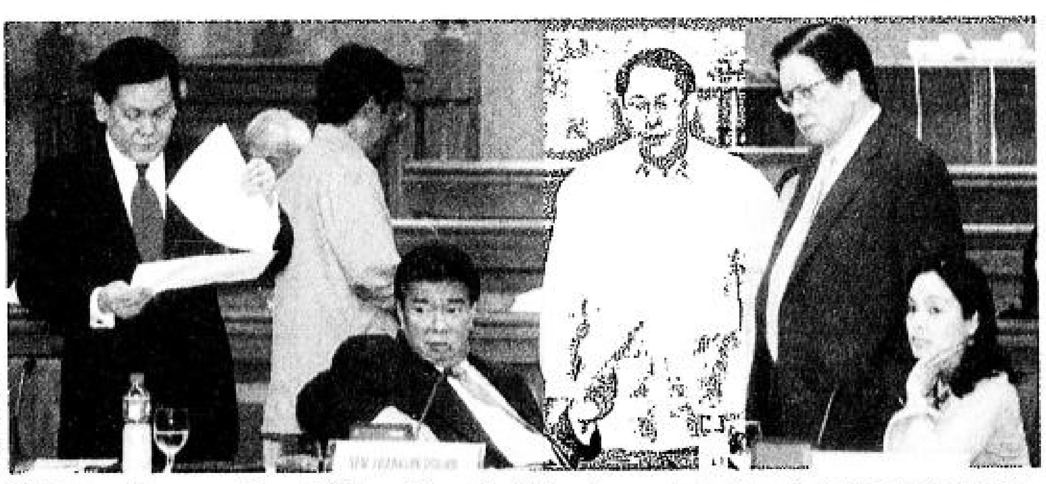
This was stressed by Michael Yates, mission director of the US Agency for International Development, in a letter yesterday to Senate President Franklin Drilon.

According to Yates, the USAID-funded Agile is neither a non-governmental agency nor a lobbying group but a project governed by a steering committee composed of the Department of Finance, National Economic Development Authority and USAID.

Drilon read a portion of Yates' letter during the "Question Hour" of the Senate committee of the whole, which was conducted to hear the views of financial officials on the controversy surrounding the ratified conference committee report on the amendments to the Anti-Money Laundering Act.

The controversy includes reports that Agile officials in the Philippines had pre-

US DEFENDS/ A9



ERIK ARAZAS

WHAT now? Senators (from left) Serge Osmeña, Drilon, Angara, John Osmeña and Legarda appear to be pondering changes to the Amla to meet international standards and the March 15 deadline.

CBCP says some lawmakers blocking Amla hiding dirty money

By Armand N. Nocum, Christine Avendaño and Cynthia Balana

SENATORS and congressmen who are blocking amendments to the Anti-Money Laundering Law (Amla) are doing so out of fear that their ill-gotten wealth would be uncovered.

This suspicion was aired by the migrant workers panel of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) yesterday.

In a telephone interview from Cebu, Bishop Ramon C. Arguelles said that "some congressmen and senators—not all—opposed (the proposed amendments) because they are affected personally ... they fear this may expose their family secrets or crimes."

"They fear the inclusion of corruption money (among the items that will be open to inspection)," he said.

"They don't really look after the country's welfare, but only themselves," added Arguelles, chair of the CBCP's Commission for Pastoral Care for Migrants and Itinerant People.

On the other hand, Arguelles was

CBCP/ A9

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. Luzon will have partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/02/20/03

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

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Second FRONTPAGE

Don't just cut PPA, scrap it, gov't urged

By Ronnel W. Domingo

SCRAPPING the purchased power adjustment (PPA) charges rather than reducing it periodically can check rising power rates, a militant group said.

The Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) said it was possible to stop the collection of the PPA until the contracts of the National Power Corp. (Napocor) and of other utility firms with independent power producers (IPPs) had been renegotiated.

"Malacañang had even said power rates could go down by 35 centavos to 40 centavos upon renegotiation of $150 million in IPP contract costs. Why wait? Why not stop the collection of the PPA immediately?" Bayan spokesperson Renato Reyes Jr. said.

Reyes was reacting to the announcement of Socioeconomic Planing Secretary Romulo Neri that Malacañang would ask Manila Electric Co. (Meralco) to reduce its PPA charges to provide relief to consumers.

The PPA is a mechanism that covers fluctuations in fuel prices and electricity bought by Napocor and distributors like Meralco from IPPs. The PPA includes the cost of electricity that IPPs do not generate.

Reyes noted that the PPA had grown 61 percent since Malacañang ordered it reduced in July 2002.

"The PPA rate for February now stands at P2.749 per kilowatt-hour. This reached a low of P1.71 per kWh last July," he said.

President Macapagal-Arroyo had ordered the Napocor to freeze its purchased power cost adjustment (PPCA) charge to 40 centavos per kWh starting July last year amid public outrage over the PPA

Distribution utilities like Meralco that buy electricity from Napocor pass the PPCA on to customers as the PPA.

Ms Macapagal's order pushed down the PPA to as low as P1.71 per kWh in July, but this has steadily increased since then.

Increasing each month

"Whatever PPA reductions that were made last July have been negated by the continuing PPA increases being imposed by Meralco and other utilities," Reyes said.

Meralco's PPA was increasing by 20 percent every month and would regain its highest level of P3.30 per kWh by March or April, according to the Abolish the PPA Coalition (Appac).

Appac convenor Alain Pascua said the PPA in January accounted for 46 percent of the total electricity bill. The currency exchange rate adjustment accounted for 3.6 percent and the basic charge, 50.5 percent.

Of the P1,181 paid by a household consuming 200 kWh a month, P542 was accounted for by the PPA, according to Pascua.

Meralco officials said increases in the PPA reflected the rise in charges imposed by power generation firms.

Meralco bills covering Jan. 7 to Feb. 6 show that customers were charged P2.749 per kWh in PPA, representing 81 percent of the P3.40 basic charge.

The PPA has risen to P2.784 per kWh, according to Ivanna de la Peña, head of Meralco's utility economics department.

Underrecoveries

De la Peña said that Meralco was charging an average of P5.81 per kWh for all customers, inclusive of all costs. "For customers using up to 300 kWh, electricity costs P6.21 per kwh," she said.

She clarified reports that the utility firm had started collected its underrecoveries in PPA.

Last December, the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) issued a decision allowing Meralco to recover about P5.7 billion out of a total P7.3 billion in deferred PPA charges. "The ERC order says we can start recovering this only when we start using an unbundled rate scheme," De la Peña said.

The ERC has yet to decide on Meralco's petition for unbundled rates, which will break down power charges into its components like fees for generation, transmission, distribution and supply.

Gloria eyes legacy of strong economy, graft-free country

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo said yesterday she wants to make her mark in the twilight of her term by handing her successor a stronger economy with less graft and a country safer from terror.

Ms Macapagal has vowed not to run for reelection in May 2004 to devote her attention to the woes of a nation plagued by budget deficit blow-outs, pervasive corruption, widespread poverty and decades of rebel violence.

"We must strengthen our institutions, we must strengthen our bureaucracy and we must work toward freeing the policy-making from the control of vested interests," she said in a wide-ranging interview at the Presidential Palace.

Despite making what she calls "the ultimate sacrifice" by not seeking a new term, there is considerable doubt Ms Macapagal will be able to make significant changes in a country where the rich wield enormous political power.

But the economist and daughter of a former Philippine leader said the key was to enshrine in law her anti-corruption and anti-poverty measures and endorse a like-minded successor.

"When reforms are legislated then they are, in effect, irreversible for a very long time," she said.

One of her major battles has been trying to get legislators to back a stronger law against money-laundering to satisfy the Paris-based Financial Action Task Force (FATF).

The country faces the threat of sanctions that would slow trade and the flow of billions of dollars sent home each year by Filipinos working overseas if it does not meet the requirements of the global watchdog by Mar. 15.

The President said senators opposed to some of the amendments would meet FATF officials in Manila shortly to discuss their concerns.

"Even the bill as it stands now has strengthened the hand of the Philippine government against money-laundering," she said. "Maybe it's slower than if there were no vested interests but we have to keep moving forward."

Financial sanctions would be devastating for the Philippines as investors already are wary about the government's ability to control spending, collect enough tax and keep the peace.

After failing to meet its budget deficit target three times in 2002, the administration has said it needs to raise more than P198 billion this year to finance a projected budget shortfall of around P202 billion.

"Our deficit so far this year is below the projected deficit," Ms Macapagal said without providing figures.

"We've modernized our way of tracking tax evasion and also we are strengthening the fight against graft and corruption plaguing the Bureau of Internal Revenue and the Bureau of Customs."

The Philippines could afford to suspend auctions of Treasury bonds and bills due to demands for higher yields because of its fiscal discipline and improved tax collection, she said. *Reuters*

Anyone has photo of 'Boracay'?

By Volt Contreras

STATE prosecutors in the Estrada plunder trial are looking for anyone who attended parties at the "Boracay" mansion and took "souvenir photos" of the controversial property in New Manila, Quezon City.

The photographs, "perhaps even media footages," would be helpful to government lawyers in their bid to show the mansion "in its former glory," Assistant Ombudsman Dennis Villa-Ignacio told the INQUIRER yesterday.

He made a public appeal: "Please send copies to the Office of the Ombudsman or the Office of the Special Prosecutor, even without revealing your identity."

Government lawyers have pushed for a pleading asking the court to conduct an ocular inspection of the P142-million property. They said the inspection would establish how the mansion was hastily stripped of its lavish furnishings after it cropped up as part of the alleged ill-gotten wealth of deposed President Joseph Estrada.

Lost passport forces judge to reset MJ's arraignment

MIAMI—A judge postponed an arraignment hearing for a Filipino congressman accused of illegal campaign fund-raising after prosecutors acknowledged Tuesday that his passport is missing.

Mark B. Jimenez, 56, presented his passport to US officials while en route to Miami in late December to face charges that he made illegal campaign contributions to the campaigns of former President Bill Clinton and other politicians.

But Assistant US Attorney Luis Perez said Jimenez's passport has not been located and government officials are trying to find it. Jimenez traveled from the Philippines to Guam, where he underwent a medical examination, before his arrival in Miami.

Jimenez, who has been trying to raise $500,000 bail for his release, aired his frustrations to US Magistrate Judge Ted Bandstra during the hearing.

"I have surrendered voluntarily. I have left behind 1.7 million constituents who I cannot represent now as a congressman," Jimenez said. "I can't understand why this can't be resolved after I've come to the United States voluntarily and I am being kept in custody because there is some difficulty with my passport."

Jimenez has been held at the Federal Detention Center in Miami since his arrival.

Richard Lumagui, supervisory deputy with the US Marshal's office in Guam, said Tuesday that he has a property receipt showing Jimenez's passport was transferred to the federal marshals' Los Angeles field office when Jimenez arrived in the United States.

"We have the property receipt that indicates his medicines, along with his passport, was transferred and signed over to the deputy in the field office," Lumagui said in a telephone interview. He did not know the current whereabouts of the passport.

A spokesperson for the Los Angeles field office did not immediately return a phone call.

Bandstra said he would sign a motion drafted by Jimenez attorney Ben Kuehne requiring the government to turn over the passport by Friday. In the event that the paperwork couldn't be located, the government would have to explain in writing why it can't produce the document. *AP*

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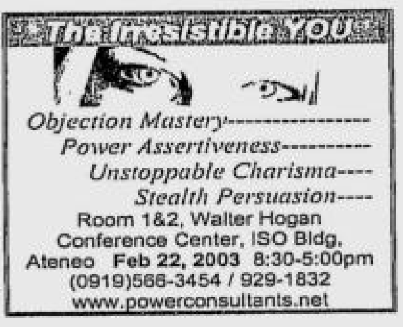
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Singaporean convicted of abusing Pinay

SINGAPORE—A Singapore housewife has been sentenced to one year in jail for repeatedly gouging and pinching her Filipino maid with her fingernails, a Philippine Embassy source said Wednesday.

Tang Kin Kiok, 43, was found guilty of three counts of abusing her maid over a period of three months and sentenced on Tuesday to one year in jail, the source said.

Sharon Macapagat Balmaceda, 23, had hundreds of deep scratch marks on her neck and arms when she reported her abuse to police in January last year, the source said.

Balmaceda's employer, Tang had earlier agreed to pay her 20,000 Singapore dollars (US$11,560), partly to compensate for medical costs, he said.

Balmaceda, who is from Pangasinan, took shelter in the embassy after she fled Tang's home last year. She intends to stay in Singapore and seek a new job soon.

Singapore employs about 140,000 foreign maids. About 80,000 come from the Philippines and 50,000 from Indonesia. *AP*

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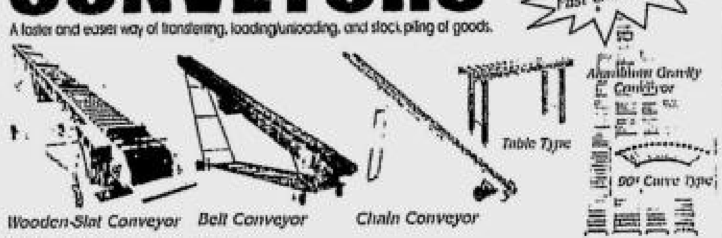

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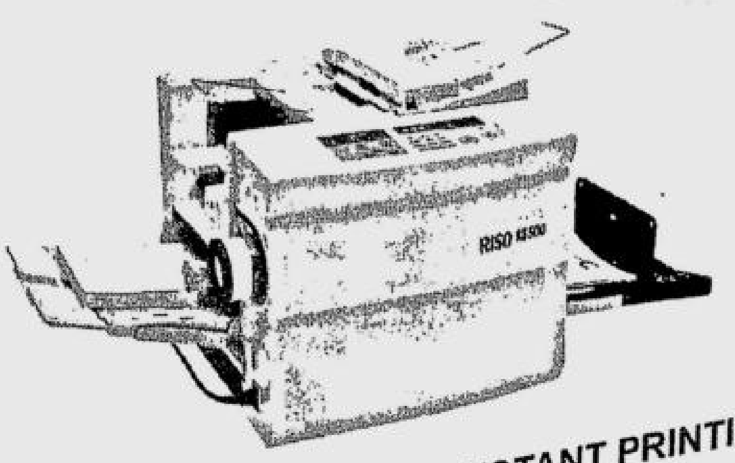

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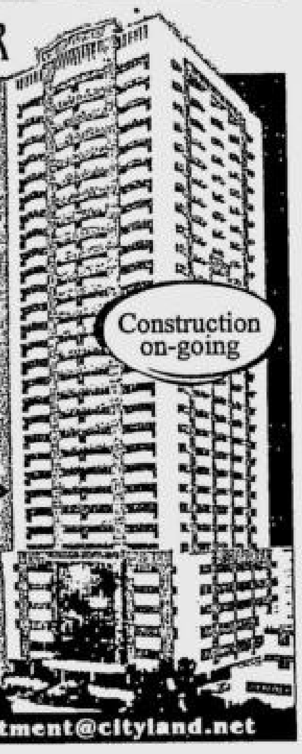

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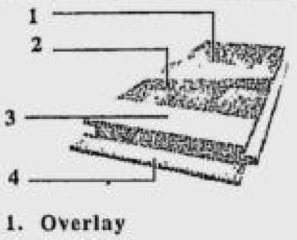

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100 poor nations to reject Bush war

From page A1

tion after nation demanded that UN weapons inspectors be given a chance to disarm Iraq peacefully in the face of intentions by the United States and Britain to seek a resolution authorizing war.

Only Australia, Japan, Argentina and Peru supported the tough US-British position during 27 presentations by UN members who do not have seats on the 15-nation Security Council. Twenty-nine other ambassadors are scheduled to address the council on Wednesday.

Most of the speakers, many from developing nations in Asia, Africa and Latin America as well as Iraq's neighbors in the Middle East, on Tuesday spoke out against war and backed France's position that arms inspectors be allowed more time to account for Baghdad's weapons of mass destruction. So did Greece, New Zealand, Ukraine and Belarus.

NAM summit

South Africa's UN ambassador and NAM chair, Dumisani Kumalo, said that "resorting to war without fully exhausting all other options represents an admission of failure by the Security Council in carrying out its mandate."

The same anti-war messages are expected to dominate the summit of NAM states, most of whom are economically poor and militarily weak. Two of them—India and Pakistan—are nuclear powers, though. Another member, North Korea, is believed to be able to produce nuclear weapons within months.

Most of the NAM members are struggling countries on the fringes of power in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

"We have no military and financial strength but we can join the world movement to oppose war on moral grounds," Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, the summit host, said in a television interview.

Mahathir acknowledged that the big powers rarely listened to NAM's voice, but said they would now be forced to do so after millions of people—many in developed countries—took to the streets last weekend in anti-war protests.

Preemptive strike

He said the summit would drive home the point that big countries should not resort to military action to change a government they did not like.

"We do not agree that the government of a country not suitable to big countries be changed by military means through a preemptive strike. If this thing is allowed to happen, maybe other countries will also suffer the same fate in the future," the Malaysian leader said.

Mahathir, a Muslim, is a bitter critic of Islamic extremism and has supported the US-led war on terrorism, but he has warned repeatedly that an attack on Iraq will create more anger among Muslims and draw more recruits to terrorist ranks.

While there will be some support for Washington from countries such as the Philippines where US troops are helping the fight against Islamic guerrillas, Mahathir had no hesitation in predicting the outcome of the debate.

Asked what would be contained in the summit's final declaration, he replied: "Certainly it is about our anti-war stand."

That stand is expected to be endorsed by a second meeting immediately after the NAM summit. Malaysia has called on Feb. 26 an informal meeting of members of the 57-nation Organization of the Islamic Conference, most of which are also NAM states.

UN debate

At the United Nations, the United States and Britain are insisting that Iraq is still hiding its banned weapons programs in violation of a Security Council resolution adopted on Nov. 8.

The two countries have started work on a follow-up measure to authorize force, but the resolution has not yet been circulated. It will probably be put to a vote before the end of the month, according to diplomats.

US Ambassador John Negroponte said the United States would wait until after the open debate before deciding on "the specifics, the timing and the contents of such a resolution." He said such a decision would be made shortly.

Iranian Ambassador Javad Zarif, whose country was invaded by neighboring Iraq in 1980, said "the prospect of another destabilizing war in our immediate vicinity is a nightmare scenario of death and destruction."

Zarif said war would raise "the prospect of appointing a foreign military commander to run an Islamic and Arab country, (which) is all the more destabilizing."

The strongest support for the United States came from Australian Ambassador John Dauth, who said there was no reason the world should give Iraqi President Saddam Hussein the benefit of the doubt given his "record."

"The council could give Iraq more time, yes. We could wait until March. We could wait another three months," Dauth said.

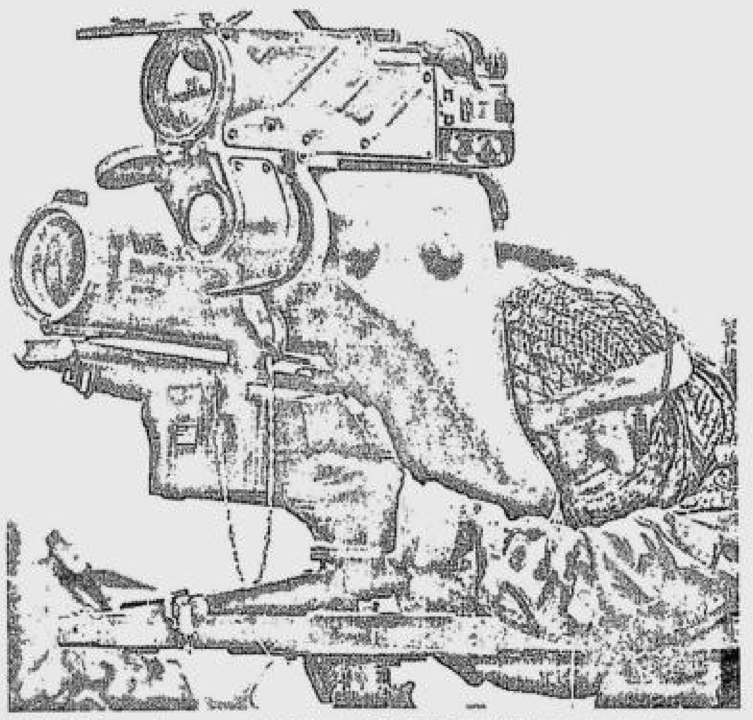
"But do we really think more time will make Iraq cooperate. Does Iraq really need more than three more months to make a decision that should take no more than three minutes?"

New Zealand

But New Zealand's UN ambassador, Don MacKay, said his government "has a very strong preference for a. diplomatic solution to this crisis."

Turkey, another Iraqi neighbor that the United States wants to use as a springboard for a possible invasion, emphasized the money it had lost due to years of sanctions against Baghdad.

Talk of war was further depressing the Turkish economy, Turkish Ambassador Umit Pamir said. "This is precisely why we are genuinely distressed with the escalation of this crisis." *Reports from AFP and Reuters*



BRITISH paratroopers training with their Land Rover-mounted Milan anti-tank missile launchers in eastern England will be in the main body of fighting troops to deploy to Kuwait on Wednesday. AP

Republic of the Philippines
Supreme Court
Manila

AD HOC PROCUREMENT COMMITTEE FOR FOREIGN
ASSISTED PROJECTS UNDER THE ACTION
PROGRAM FOR JUDICIAL REFORM

INVITATION FOR APPLICANTS FOR CONSULTANTS/SPECIALISTS IN: (1) INFRASTRUCTURE; (2) RESULTS MONITORING AND EVALUATION (RME); AND (3) CHANGE MANAGEMENT

The Government of the Philippines has received a grant from the World Bank Policy and Human Resource Development towards the cost of preparing the Judicial Reform Support Project (JRSP) and intends to apply a portion of the grant to eligible payments under this Contract.

The Supreme Court of the Philippines now invites individuals to provide consulting services to the Program Management Office and the Ad Hoc Procurement Committee for Foreign-Assisted Projects in all procurement activities and in the establishment of procurement systems and mechanisms under the World Bank project.

The period of engagement for the consulting services shall be two (2) months.

Interested individuals must possess the following minimum qualifications:

1. **Infrastructure Specialist**
   Education : Must have at least a Master's Degree in Engineering or related field
   Experience : Must have a minimum of ten (10) years recent experience in similar engagements with either government agencies or the private sector, and should not be included in the blacklist of consultants.
2. **Results Monitoring & Evaluation (RME) Specialist**
   Education : Holder of at least a Master's Degree in Statistics, Education, Economics, Engineering or other related fields.
   Experience : Must have at least 10 years experience in program/project planning, development and implementation, particularly in monitoring and evaluation. The consultant must also be knowledgeable on the logical framework approach and have at least five (5) years experience in the practical application of RME as a methodological planning tool.
3. **Change Management Specialist**
   Education Must have at least a Master's Degree in Psychology, Development Studies, Development Communication, Mass Communication, Education or other related fields.
   Experience Must have at least 5 years experience in implementing Change Management Projects in either government or private institutions.
   Must be experienced in developing competency-based programs with expertise in adult learning principles

Due to the urgency of the consultancy requirements, interested applicants are required to submit not later than 12:00 N.N. on 24 February 2003 a Letter of Intent together with a certified true copy of his/her resumé to:

Atty. Ma. Luisa D. Villarama
Chairperson
Ad Hoc Procurement Committee for Foreign-Assisted Projects under the APJR
Office of the Clerk of Court, En Banc
Supreme Court of the Philippines
Padre Faura St., Ermita, Manila
E-mail: mdv@supremecourt.gov.ph

The Terms of Reference (TOR) may be secured from the same Office or downloaded from the Supreme Court website www.supremecourt.gov.ph

Only short-listed applicants will be called for interview on Tuesday, 25 February 2003. Please bring sample written outputs from previous engagements and nine (9) copies of resumé on interview date.

18 February 2003.

MdVillarama
MA. LUISA D. VILLARAMA
Assistant Clerk of Court &
Chairperson
Ad Hoc Procurement Committee for
Foreign-Assisted Projects

Bee Gees? No, veggies

From page A1

bles—as musical instruments.

In fact, the First Vienna Vegetable Orchestra descends on London this week to cook up a storm with its carrot flutes, leek violins, celery bongos and aubergine cymbals during performances at the South Bank arts complex.

And when the instruments are worn out, the musicians, and a conductor who doubles as cook, will toss each veggie instrument into a stewpot to make soup—to be enjoyed by the audience, and the musicians, after the concert.

This, according to the orchestra's website, gives the audience "the possibility of once again enjoying what they have just heard, examining any remaining instruments more closely and conversing with the musicians."

Before each performance, the band tours local markets to find fresh vegetables of just the right caliber and quality.

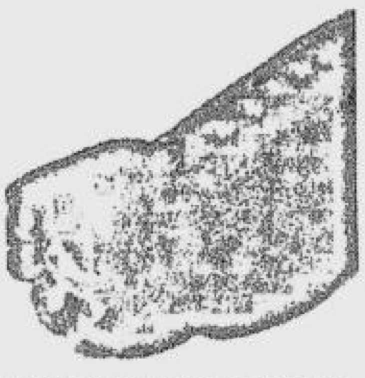
One of the group's classics, the gurkophone, is made from a hollowed cucumber, a pepper and a carrot. The instruments consist exclusively of vegetables, although additional kitchen utensils such as knives or mixers are sometimes used.

The orchestra, founded in January 1998, plays a wide range of music—from traditional African pieces to classical European concert music to experimental electronic music.

The group, a hit in its hometown, Vienna, has a CD, Gemise, which is available in its website. A second CD is set to be released next month. Those who want a taste of the group's music can check out www.gemueseorchester.org.

Are the orchestra members vegetarians or vegans?

The group, in its website, answers: "No we are not. Don't ask again. We've heard this question two million times." *With a report from Reuters*



COOL cucumber, a pepper and a carrot make up gurkophon, a classic instrument of the First Vienna Vegetable Orchestra.

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE
BUREAU OF INTERNAL REVENUE
Quezon City

February 12, 2003

REVENUE REGULATIONS NO. 8-2003

SUBJECT : Regulations Further Amending Revenue Regulations No. 14-97, as Last Amended by Revenue Regulations No. 4-2003.
To : All internal Revenue Officers and Others Concerned.

SECTION 1. SCOPE. – Pursuant to the provisions of Section 244, in relation to Section 245 of the National Internal Revenue Code of 1997 (Code), these Regulations are hereby promulgated to defer the implementation of the amendatory provisions introduced by Revenue Regulations No. 4-2003 amending Revenue Regulations No. 14-97, as amended by Revenue Regulations No. 14-99, except for the compliance requirements provided in the transitory provisions of Revenue Regulations 4-2003 which must be observed not later than the dates prescribed hereunder.

SEC. 2. TRANSITORY PROVISIONS.- Section 6 of Revenue Regulations No. 4-2003, further amending Revenue Regulations no. 14-97, as amended by Revenue Regulations No. 14-99, is hereby amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 6. TRANSITORY PROVISIONS.-

(a) The provisions of Revenue Regulations No. 14-97, as amended by Revenue Regulations No. 14-99 shall be applicable to all automobiles completely assembled or imported (Completely-Built-Up (CBU) units, including Completely-Knocked-Down (CKD) and Semi-Knocked-Down (SKD) units), that are still in the custody of the Bureau of Customs and where import entries thereof have already been filed, or in the place of production, assembly plant or warehouse, as the case maybe, as of February 15, 2003;

(b) For this purpose, the following must be complied with:

(i) All importers and/or assemblers shall submit a duly notarized list of inventory on-hand of completely assembled automobiles or CBUs, including Completely-Knocked-Down (CKD) and Semi-Knocked Down (SKD) units, that are located within the assembly plant or warehouse or the customs' premises as of the date immediately preceding the date of effectivity of these Regulations, indicating the engine, body and chassis numbers thereof. The list shall be submitted to the Commissioner of Internal Revenue, thru the Chief, Large taxpayers Assistance Division II, not later than February 26, 2003. Failure to submit the inventory list on the part of the importers/assemblers shall be construed that said importers/assemblers do not have any inventory on hand of CBUs, CKDs and SKDs as of February 15, 2003:

(ii) A stocktaking of the aforesaid inventories shall be conducted by the Bureau of Internal Revenue for purposes of validating the said list, within five (5) days from the date of submission thereof; and

(iii) Prior to February 16, 2003, an ocular inspection and measurement shall be conducted on the different brands/models of vehicles to determine whether or not such brands/models are considered automobiles as defined under the provisions of these Regulations."

SEC. 3. DEFERMENT CLAUSE. – The implementation of Revenue Regulations No. 4-2003 will be deferred until March 31, 2003, except as prescribed in Section 2 hereof amending Section 6 of Revenue Regulations No. 4-2003.

SEC. 4. EFFECTIVITY CLAUSE.- These Regulations shall take effect Immediately.

JOSE ISIDRO N. CAMACHO
Secretary of Finance

Recommending Approval:

GUILLERMO L. PARAYNO, JR.
Commissioner of Internal Revenue

Inquirer--Feb. 20, 2003

Acsa shouldn't expect apology . . .

From page A1

National Bureau of Investigation.

Ms Macapagal brusquely cut short reporter Anthony Taberna of dzMM who was trying to get in a last question before she left the State Dining Hall. She appeared to have guessed that the question would concern Ramirez's case because it was the only current issue that was not touched on at the luncheon.

In a respectful tone, Taberna began by saying he was aware that the President was not in the habit of reacting to what others said.

"*Alam mo na pala, eh* (So you already know that)," Ms Macapagal shot back, and left the room without a second glance even as Taberna was trying to continue his question.

When sought for comment, the President's spokesperson skipped around the matter of an apology.

"We will allow the NBI to follow the legal process in this regard," Ignacio Bunye said in a terse statement.

"A decision as to whether or not an apology will be extended to Ms Ramirez will be made as soon as the process is completed," he added.

In August 2002, NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco presented Ramirez, a cashier of the Land Bank of the Philippines, as a suspect in the scam at a press conference attended by the President. It was then the height of Ms Macapagal's personal campaign against crime.

Neither the President nor Wycoco apologized to Ramirez even after top bank officials clarified that the latter was in fact the whistle-blower.

NBI Assistant Director Lolito Utitco yesterday said the Ombudsman's decision to clear Ramirez did not preclude the bureau's right to file a case against her if it finds evidence against her in the future.

Utitco also said he had yet to see a copy of the Ombudsman resolution.

Despite the Ombudsman resolution, life is a continuing hell for Acsa, her husband Feliciano and their two young children.

Most painful

Husband and wife still live under guard in a safe house and rarely see their 2-year-old daughter and 3-year-old son, who are under the care of an aunt in the province.

"I don't get to see my children grow and take care of them personally," Acsa told the INQUIRER Tuesday night, holding back her tears. "That is the most painful part. We see them only once or twice a month because we don't have enough money to visit them often. I don't want to cry."

She said it was the elder child who often cried "because he is starting to realize our situation."

"When we visit, he immediately runs to us begging us to take him," she said. "He thinks we are leaving him right away. When we leave, he cries again."

The last time the family was together was Valentine's Day.

But Acsa and Feliciano are stressed out by having been forced to leave their Antipolo home for security reasons and trying to cope with the case that the NBI lodged with the Office of the Ombudsman.

They are tired of having to anxiously look behind their shoulders on the rare times that they go out together, out of fear of the syndicate behind the scam.

As much as possible, they leave the safe house separately.

Feliciano said: "When we both go out, somehow people recognize us. I told her to put gel on her hair."

Acsa said: "We seldom go out. The last time we did was to watch the James Bond movie ('Die Another Day') because I really wanted to see it. I like action [movies]."

While she has not noticed any suspicious-looking person shadowing them, Acsa was surprised when somebody recognized her at a market.

Fame

"We were going to the province then, so we bought milk and diapers," she said. "The bagger recognized us. He said he saw me on TV."

She added, smiling: "My feeling was that he was *hangang-hanga* (he admired me so much). I think he thought I was a newscaster."

But later at the parking lot, she said, the bagger told her to "be careful."

Acsa said she also met an old college friend at a wedding.

"He was really surprised and said that he did not expect me to have the courage to do it," she said.

From the Landbank's Binangonan branch, Acsa has been transferred to the headquarters in Manila and goes to work with a bodyguard and a driver provided by the bank.

"It was a traumatic experience but I have decided to continue to work for the bank," she said. "I miss [my co-workers at the Binangonan branch). All my life I was in operations. I started my career from below. Now I seldom see them and only get to talk to them on the phone."

Acsa said she had kept her strength by praying and reading the Bible. She also never missed going to church.

"In the beginning, I asked why it happened to me," she said. "But I read in the Bible that I was supposed to 'give light.' Of course, now I'm very thankful that there is still justice."

Asked what she would tell the President or Wycoco if she had a chance to meet them, Acsa smiled, turned to her husband, and mumbled something about prayers.

Then she said a line she had rehearsed with her lawyer: "I did not ask for forgiveness then. What more now when I have justice?"

Acsa will give a "testimony" on her trials at her church's fellowship service this Sunday.

Joe de V defends Danding backers

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

SPEAKER Jose de Venecia Jr. has taken up the cudgels for 50 Lakas congressmen who signed a petition urging businessman Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco, chair emeritus of the Nationalist People's Coalition (NPC), to be their standard-bearer in 2004.

De Venecia, who co-chairs Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats (CMD) with President Macapagal-Arroyo, yesterday denied that the party was set to impose sanctions on the Cojuangco endorsers.

Lakas executive director Jose Rufino earlier announced that the party executive committee would discuss what should be done about the 50 solons.

De Venecia explained that the endorsement was merely a "preliminary proposal," and that sanctions were therefore unnecessary. The party was to pick its initial choices by May or June, he said, and the standard-bearer would be chosen in late December or early January 2003.

House Majority Leader Neptali Gonzales II and Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero Pichay, did not sign the petition, but defended their colleagues who rooted for Cojuangco, chair and chief executive officer of San Miguel Corporation.

"That was their personal choice, not a party stand," Pichay said. Besides, he pointed out, NPC was part of the pro-administration coalition. With 63 members in the House, it is the second biggest party in the chamber.

Pichay corrected an INQUIRER report that said he was among the signatories to the emotional letter submitted to Cojuangco last Friday by Negros Oriental Rep. Jacinto Paras. He said he did not sign in deference to the President's call for a political moratorium.

Paras had warned of a party split, should the pro-Cojuangco solons be sanctioned. Rufino fumed, "Who is Paras threatening? If he cannot wait for the party to come up with its official bet, what's keeping him in Lakas? He is free to leave."

Paras shot back: "I'm not leaving just because Mr. Rufino says so." He pointed out that he had been with Lakas since its birth in 1992, long before Rufino came in.

Rufino reminded Paras that President Macapagal told Lakas members during the national directorate meeting on Jan. 20 to refrain from politicking.

"He should show some respect," Rufino said.

The Cojuangco draft did not constitute disrespect in any way, Paras protested, especially since "the President considers it an ally."

Rufino also said De Venecia was expected to "go soft" on the pro-Cojuangco lawmakers. "They're Manong Joe's colleagues," he said, "and knowing the kindhearted Speaker, he'd prefer just to talk this one over."

He clarified that he wasn't against Cojuangco, but that he wanted to stick to party processes in picking a standard bearer, preferably one from inside the party. *With Carlito Pablo*

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NPC to stick with Lakas for '04 polls

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

TOP officials of the Nationalist People's Coalition yesterday denied that their party had been holding negotiations with the opposition Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino to field a common presidential candidate in 2004.

"We have a coalition with Lakas and we'll stick to that," said Isabela Gov. Faustino Dy Jr., newly elected NPC chair.

"We're not in any talks with the LDP," said Tarlac Rep. Gilbert Teodoro, leader of the 63-strong NPC in the House and nephew of Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco, NPC chair emeritus.

Cojuangco, chair and chief executive officer of San Miguel Corp., was earlier petitioned by 50 Lakas members to be their standard bearer in 2004. (See related story.)

Pangasinan Rep. Mark Cojuangco, Danding's eldest son, also said earlier that his father was committed to maintaining the coalition.

Prior to the denials, the LDP announced that "unity talks" were in progress between itself and the NPC. It even ousted former President Joseph Estrada's Partido ng Masang Pilipino for a united opposition presidential candidate in 2004.

"There is now a possibility that the opposition parties LDP and NPC will field a common candidate," Makati Rep. Agapito "Butz" Aquino, LDP secretary general, said in a statement.

House Minority Leader Carlos Padilla, a party official, said Cojuangco could be it, since the opposition wanted the "best and strongest candidate." He stressed that LDP was not yet committed to Sen. Panfilo Lacson or anyone else.

Gov't, NDF panels meet

AMSTERDAM, Netherlands—Philippine government negotiators met with exiled Filipino communist rebels in the Netherlands on Tuesday, seeking to revive stalled peace talks to end more than three decades of violence in their country.

A negotiator for the rebels, Fidel Agcaoili, said government officials had arrived in the city of Utrecht, 30 kilometers (18 miles) east of Amsterdam, and held a cordial round of meetings.

"We are still setting the agenda," he said. The discussions were expected to last three days, he said.

Peace talks between the Philippine government and the National Democratic Front, which is the political wing of the 12,000-strong New People's Army rebel group, have been stalled for nearly two years, while fighting continued in a 34-year-long insurgency.

"The government team is here. We don't know what they have in mind," he said in a telephone interview.

The government panel headed by chief negotiator Silvestre Bello III is expected to hand over a final peace proposal approved by President Macapagal Arroyo this month. The fresh government initiative comes amid escalated clashes in recent months.

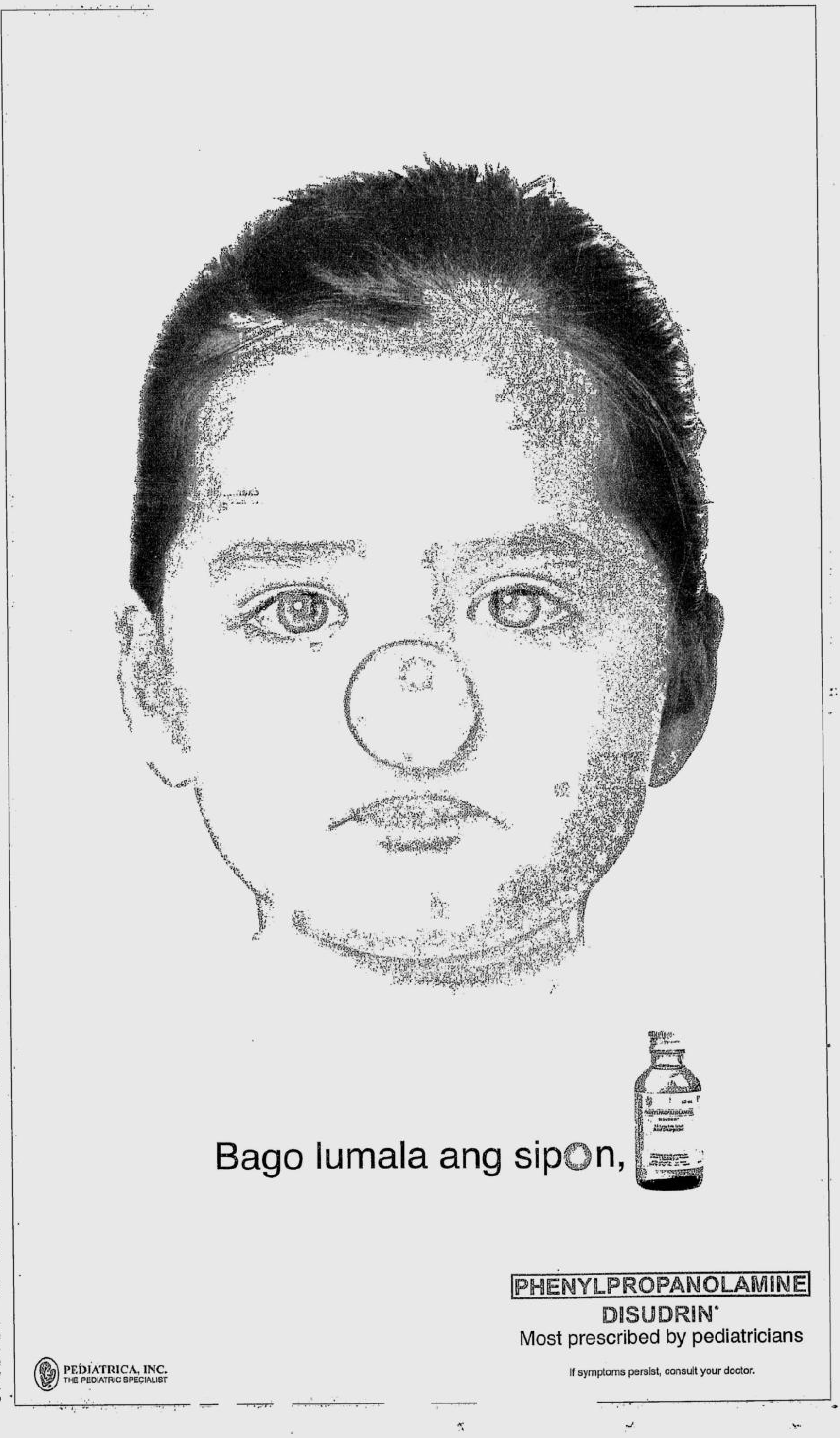
The rebel group has been blacklisted as a terrorist by the European Union and the United States, but the Netherlands has refused requests from Manila to extradite rebel leaders because they could face the death penalty at home.

The Communist Party of the Philippines provides political leadership to the National Democratic Front, the umbrella organization for 14 groups, including the New People's Army.

Agcaoili said the first item to discuss must be the sanctions against communist members whose bank accounts have been frozen and who are subject to a European travel ban.

"These are obstacles, but as we have said, it is something that has to be overcome before any formal negotiations can get under way," he said.

Jose Maria Sison, the founder of the Communist Party, fled to the Netherlands in the 1980s and is now the rebel's chief political adviser in the peace talks. Western intelligence groups claim he is also the covert military leader of the rebels, an allegation he denies. *AP*



Eugenia D. Apostol *Founding Chairman*

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OPINION

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Quid pro quo

EDITORIAL

TURKEY is engaged in some tough bargaining with the United States over the use of its bases by American forces as staging areas for an attack on the northern front of Iraq.

As the United States accelerates the build-up of its forces to 200,000 troops deployed around Iraq, Turkish President Necdet Sezer has insisted that before Turkey allows the use of its bases for American deployment, the aid issue must be resolved. The United States has offered an aid package worth $26 billion. Turkey has asked for double that amount. The talks over the pay-off for the use of parts of Turkey as an invasion platform have been deadlocked for several weeks now.

With little time left before an invasion, which reaches its strategic optimum advantage by mid-March, the United States has stepped up the pressure on Turkey. The United States says the $26 billion offer is "final."

But Turkey, which is a key strategic ally of Nato, is playing hard to get and is not easily cowed. The Turkish government has said extra troop deployment would violate its constitution unless the United Nations Security Council passes a new resolution authorizing military action against Iraq.

Turkey is well aware of its strategic importance in the Nato alliance, and this position is being more accented in the Iraq crisis where Turkey and Kuwait are key corridors and staging points for the invasion of Iraq. Turkey has therefore a strong leverage to squeeze economic and aid concessions from the United States to strengthen its own economy.

Although Turkey has been a US ally since the Cold War, it has not followed unquestioningly President George W. Bush's bellicose policy toward Iraq. It has at least shown more independence than the Philippines on the issue of backing the US war effort by insisting that an attack on Iraq should be authorized by a new UN resolution.

The Philippines is less clear about this issue. Judging from the statements of President Macapagal-Arroyo and the Department of Foreign Affairs, one is not quite sure whether the Philippines is for intervention within a UN mandate or regardless of it.

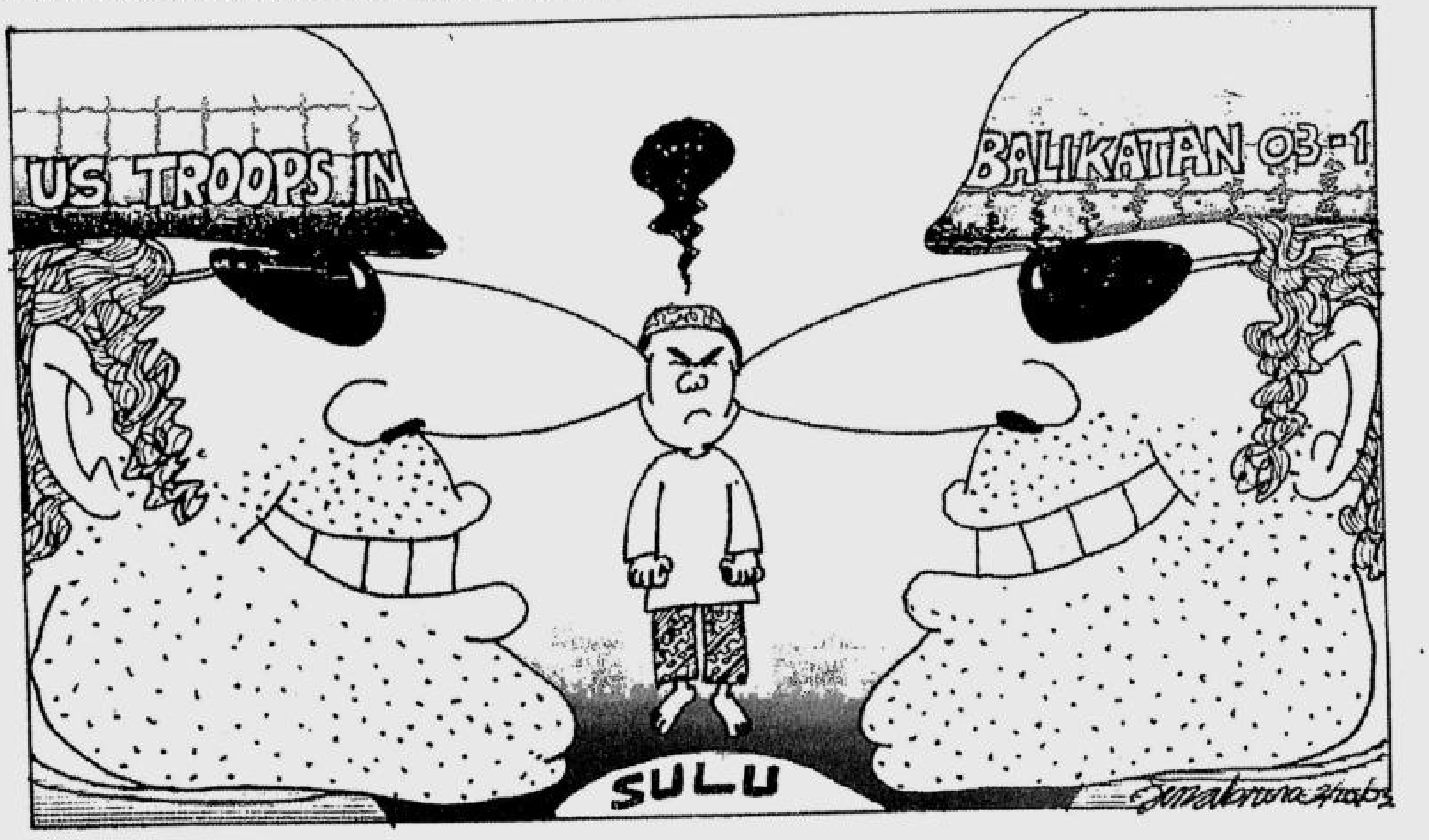
Like Turkey, the Philippines has been promised $78.65 million in military assistance this year and an unspecified amount in economic aid. The aid package was announced after Ms Macapagal had backed to the hilt Bush's campaign against international terrorism, and more recently, his war policy.

Although Bush has said that the Philippines has a strategic importance in the Asian front of the war on terrorism, the Philippine government has never played the aid card to extract further concessions necessary to build a strong economy and a stable social system. The Macapagal administration just accepted what the United States offered.

In the real world of alliances, coalitions are not cemented by common strategic interests alone. Underlying coalitions is a strong element of military and economic assistance. During the attack on the Taliban in Afghanistan, Pakistan won substantial aid concessions from the United States in exchange for access by US-led forces to Pakistani bases and overflights of supplies and troops from aircraft carriers.

In the history of US aid to this country since the end of World War II, different Philippine administrations have proven to be less than adept at bargaining. Other countries that backed the United States during the Cold War had proportionately and relatively received more aid than the Philippines, although the country's commitment in the conflict with the communist alliance was more fervent than that of most of America's allies. The United States has always tended to take this country for granted in its post-war alliances, and the Philippines has accepted without much complaint whatever the United States gave.

The Philippine government should not regard the aid being dangled by the United States as gratuitous doles. They are part of the quid pro quo that seals alliances. The country, as well as the government, is putting into the US alliance value that America needs to broaden the base of its "alliance of the willing." Thus, our government, in considering aid packages, should examine whether we are receiving commensurate value for putting the country at risk by supporting the United States in its confrontation with Iraq.



Top officials continue raids even after retirement

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

(This is a continuation of yesterday's column containing the point-by-point reply of the Government Service Insurance System to my Feb. 14 and 17 columns on the abolition of the limit to the average monthly compensation [AMC] on which the pensions and premiums of GSIS members are based. The effect of the lifting of limits is to continue the raids by top officials of the government financial institutions on the coffers of their respective corporations and the GSIS Pension Fund even after they retire.)

- **"IT is irrational and contradictory to all social security principles...to allow the payment of P263,000 monthly to the retiree when the consumer price index is, for instance, only P16,000."**

Under Commonwealth Act No. 660, PD 1146 and RA 8291, the basis for the computation for the amount of pension received by a GSIS member is his length of service and the AMC. If one's salary is P30,000 and his years of service is only 15 years, he would not be getting 90 percent but only 37.5 percent of his AMC for the last three years of service for his pension. When the AMC limit was still on, the retiring GSIS member whose salary was more than the P16,000 AMC limit could not get the full value of the mandated benefit.

The consumer price index of the previous year, on the other hand, is among the bases for the pension rate increase that the GSIS is effecting for a particular year. Moreover, as provided for under PD 712, the basic monthly pension should be regularly adjusted based on the five-year inflation index determined by the National Economic Development Authority (Neda). Thus, the GSIS retiree-pensioner is assured that through the years, his regular monthly pension will not lose its purchasing value and will be a real replacement income for his salary when he was still in active service.

- **That when a pensioner "starts to receive his monthly pension after the five-year period covered by the lump-sum payment, he no longer has any equity left in the pension fund from which to source his pension. His pension is therefore now sourced from the contributions of current contributors."**

The annuity is not computed on a five-year period but on a lifetime annuity period. Therefore, the premium contributions that the employee and employers pay throughout the years already take into account payments beyond the guaranteed five-year annuity period.

* * *

I'm sorry but I don't agree with the GSIS' excuses and I believe GSIS chief Winston Garcia still violated the law, the GSIS charter, in removing the AMC limit. It is my turn to refute point-by-point the GSIS' excuses.

- On the denial that Garcia will benefit from his scheme. The truth is, he will.

Garcia served as provincial board member of Cebu for seven years. Under RA 8291 this service is creditable and therefore will be counted in the computation of the total number of years of service. Assuming that he will finish his term in the GSIS, he will have another three years to add to his service as provincial board member. This will put his total creditable years of service to 10 years.

Garcia's last three years in the GSIS for which he receives something like P300,000 a month will be the basis in computing his average monthly compensation (AMC). With less than 15 years of service Garcia will not be entitled to retirement benefits. However, he will be entitled to a separation benefit equivalent to 100 percent of the AMC for every year of service. Thus, with a total service of 10 years, Garcia will get P3 million in separation benefit. He will receive that bonanza when he reaches 60 years.

Aside from this, his sister whom he has appointed as vice president in the GSIS will also benefit in the form of separation benefits when she leaves at the end of the term of her brother. However, if she stays up to the time she qualifies for retirement, then she will enjoy the full effect of the removal of the ceiling on the AMC.

And what about all the officials of the GSIS who will benefit from this evil scheme? The executive vice president, the actuary and the rest of the officials who are supposed to advice Garcia—they will all benefit from the scheme. They must have all agreed with the wrong view of Garcia because they themselves will benefit from it.

- That Garcia did not violate the law when he removed the ceiling on the AMC:

The GSIS explanation of the legal basis for the removal is a mere general statement and not a provision of RA 8291. It cannot cite a provision because there is none. The fact that the law already sets a ceiling already contradicts the removal of such ceiling, otherwise the law should have specified that the GSIS can remove the ceiling.

This is what RA 8291 provides:

Sec. 2 (1) ...provided, that the average monthly compensation shall in no case exceed the amount and rate as may be respectively set by the Board under the rules and regulations implementing this Act as determined by the Actuary of the GSIS; provided further, that initially the average monthly compensation shall not exceed Ten Thousand Pesos (P10,000).

Nothing here allows the removal of the ceiling. This is so because the ceiling is indispensable and critical in maintaining balance, equity and fair distribution of the pension fund. The ceiling on the AMC is therefore an absolute condition. It is there to ensure equity. Without it, or by setting it at a preposterously high level, the antecedent controls are all negated. The words "adjustment" and "removal" are not similar, much less identical.

Malacañang, the senators and congressmen should look into this anomaly. It negates all concepts and principles of social security.

Global

There's the Rub

Conrado de Quiros

THE PEACE marches began last weekend, some of them, like the ones in the United States and Europe, being pretty huge. The one in Australia, though relatively small by the standards of other countries, was a record turnout. As was the rally in London, where close to a million, which is the official figure (the unofficial one put it at more than a million), took to the streets and put traffic to a halt. If those rallies are any indication, Tony Blair and John Howard won't be staying very long in their places of work.

I waited for the reports to mention one country that had known spectacular anti-war rallies in the 1960s and early 1970s. In vain. There was no mention of the Philippines at all. At least not on BBC and CNN on the occasions I caught their footage on the peace rallies. And not in the wire reports that saw print in our dailies last Monday. The reports mentioned Japan and Malaysia, but not the Philippines.

Several groups, of course, held peace rallies in various parts of Metro Manila, but they were small and scattered. Enough for the hoods demanding "statehood" or "commonwealthhood" to block the protesters in Ermita who were on their way to the US Embassy and chase them all the way to Roxas Boulevard after an altercation. That wouldn't have happened years ago. Certainly, it didn't happen during the anti-Erap rallies, when the protesters were far too many for Erap's goons to harass.

The first thing last weekend's pathetic peace marches in this country showed is the extent to which civil society has stopped being civil and begun only to be cavil. To quibble about whether to remain in "critical collaboration" with GMA or not, and to squabble over spoils. That is true as well of former standouts in civil society who are now with the government. Can anything more dramatically show the plunge to pettiness than that Bobi Tiglao and Nani Braganza should go to war in Malacañang to take possession of the Marcos room while the United States is threatening to go to war in the Middle East to take possession of Iraqi oil? For what, the chance to sit on Marcos' chair and breathe the air he breathed, if only for a year or so? That is as cheap a thrill as they come. It doesn't profit a man to gain the world and lose his soul. But for Marcos' room!

Far more importantly, the pall of silence shows the extent to which this country has remained exceedingly insular or parochial. Which is sublimely ironic given that the various presidents of this country have proclaimed themselves to be staunchly pro-globalization and possessing a global outlook. The isolation of this country from the thinking of most of the globe—and its blind belief in anything the United States preaches—shows clearly that what we take to be newfound globalism is really lingering colonialism. What we take to be an international framework is really the American framework. What we take to be cosmopolitan and modern is really backward and primitive. What we take to be the collective voice of humanity is really the deluded mind of George Bush and Donald Rumsfeld.

Think about it: All we really understand by globalization is that when the IMF and World Bank tell us to drop subsidies to food and privatize public-service industries, we jump to it. All we understand by globalization is that when the WTO tells us to allow goods from the developed countries to flow freely into our markets while not allowing our labor to flow freely into theirs, we bow to it. We've never thought of globalization as improving ties with our Asian neighbors, or even just our Southeast Asian ones, many of whose populations are Muslim. We've never thought of globalization as improving ties with Europe, where we have half a million or more workers, or the South countries to which we belong. We've never thought of globalization as reposing trust in the UN over the United States, discovering a world beyond America, finding our own voice to contribute to collective humanity's.

The image of the fly on top of the carabao's back comes to mind again. Look at what Blas Ople just said the other day. Hans Blix's report, he said, echoing Colin Powell, does not impress us. Who cares? Who cares that this country is bent on showing the world how far it can bend over backward to lick ass? The peace rallies the world over show at least how most of humanity thinks, even if, as in the case of the Australians, Americans, Britons, Spaniards and Italians, that is not how their leaders do.

Frankly, I don't know how Ople, who was once a feisty and pugnacious nationalist, could turn into this, well, I leave the reader to supply his own description. One would imagine that in old age one would feel the rumblings of mortality and think of leaving a legacy to the children rather than clinging to pelf at all costs, but I guess it takes all kinds. There must "be a principled basis for lasting world peace," one in which "terrorism can be controlled, and finally eliminated," he says. But of course there is, which was clearly articulated by someone years younger than he, Tommaso Palladini, 56, who traveled from Milan to Rome to join the march there: "You don't fight terrorism with a preventive war. You fight terrorism by creating more justice in the world."

Global? We're not even provincial, we're *barriotic*. Allah or Jehovah help Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo when she attends the meeting of non-aligned nations. No one has yet achieved fame, or even notice, playing sorry sidekick to a foreign power. Not even Tonto who neither did the white man nor his fellow Indians a favor by putting his life in line for the not very lone Lone Ranger. Well, his name, which is this country's middle initial, thanks in no small way to uncivil society, says it all: Tonto.

* * *

Comments to dequiros@vasia.com

Were opposition senators out to protect Erap accounts?

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

AT THE PHILIPPINE Military Academy alumni homecoming last weekend where Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr., chair of the Senate defense committee, was the guest of honor, Commodore Carlos Agustin (ret.), chair of the PMA Alumni Association, recalled how the graduating class of 1957 had such a sorrowful graduation because of the tragic death in a plane crash of President Ramon Magsaysay in Cebu just days earlier. Agustin noted that Magsaysay remains one of the most loved political figures in Philippine history. Senator Magsaysay is heir to a much-loved name indeed, but at the homecoming he sought to jokingly endear himself to the hundreds of alumni baking on the parade grounds under a hot midday sun by promising to deliver only a 10-minute extemporaneous speech. Magsaysay pointed out that the AFP is one of the few institutions enjoying the people's trust today, and exhorted the alumni to carry out the "three C's of leadership:" character, competence and courage.

* * *

Like his father, the senator exudes an easy and effortless charm, but that day in a brief conversation I had with him after the homecoming, he was definitely weighed down by the rejection by the Paris-based Financial Action Task Force (FATF) of the amendments to our Anti-Money Laundering Act (AMLA). This was understandable, since he was the principal sponsor of the amended AMLA. The FATF rejected the amendments for being not strong enough to keep dirty money out, and has threatened to apply full sanctions by March 15 unless the infirmities are not corrected.

I asked Magsaysay what needed to be done, and he opined that President Macapagal-Arroyo could work on her allies who voted with nine other senators in the opposition against most of the amendments. These are Senators Joker Arroyo, Loren Legarda and Manuel Villar. Frankly I'm not surprised at Joker, for he is often viewed as ultra-nationalistic. Neither was it strange that Villar voted with him since they vote together quite often. But Legarda, the majority leader, voting against a priority bill of the administration does raise eyebrows.

* * *

Magsaysay pointed out that RP competitiveness would be affected by the FATF rejection. He noted that some local banks have already been removed from correspondence relations with foreign banks. He also stressed that the 12 senators who objected to more sweeping AMLA amendments had agreed to the lifting of a court order only in relation to 3 out of 14 "predicate crimes" originally listed by the FATF, namely, kidnapping for ransom, drug trafficking and hijacking. Left out of AMLA's coverage are crimes like smuggling, plunder and graft and corruption. The 12 senators also turned down a FATF stipulation that accounts opened even before the passage of AMLA in October 2001 could be scrutinized.

* * *

The issue of a court order to protect accounts became a major bone of contention between the two chambers at the bicameral conference committee, but as Magsaysay noted, of the 60 countries that had already been taken off the FATF's original watchlist of 71 suspicious countries, 55 do not require a court order to scrutinize suspicious accounts.

In this connection, I note that a number of columnists have speculated on the reasons for the 12 senators going against the FATF conditions. Some columnists opine that this could be a ploy by the "leftists" and the "rightists" in the Senate to destroy the economy and bring President Macapagal-Arroyo down through a worsening economy. There are strong suspicions, though, that the real reason nine opposition members went against the inclusion of plunder and violations of the anti-graft and corrupt practices act among the conditions that do not require a court order, is to protect the many bank accounts of former President Joseph Estrada and his many families. It's tempting to believe this especially when one considers that the opposition also vetoed retroactive coverage for AMLA.

* * *

One of the House members zealously pushing industrialist Eduardo Cojuangco to accept a presidential draft from Lakas in 2004 is Negros Oriental Rep. Jacinto Paras of the same party. Paras was also in the forefront of the House vote to throw out the impeachment complaint against Election Commissioner Luzviminda Tancangco, wherein the NPC voted as a bloc to support her. It seems that Paras has tied his destiny to Cojuangco, and to many of his provincemates and former colleagues in the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA), this comes as a bit of a shocker. I must confess that I myself cannot reconcile the new Paras with the guy we knew in the old days as a Cory Crusader and later an FVR loyalist. In fact, on the evening of Feb. 3, after the pro-Tancangco bloc, led, among others by Paras, succeeded in forcing a vote on her impeachment despite an agreement to hold it on Feb. 4, I couldn't resist asking him, "Whatever happened to you, Jing?"

* * *

As legal counsel of the PCA right after Edsa I, Paras was in the forefront of the Cory administration's moves to recover the coconut levy funds from Cojuangco and his cohorts. In fact, Paras argued the levy case in the Supreme Court for the government and he was nearly cited for contempt for losing his cool during one of the hearings. As a reward, FVR appointed him director in the UCPB Board. He also heroically rammed through the blocking force against Cocofed's hired hands, in an effort to sequester a building in Makati which he successfully "recaptured."

Today, in an apparent change of heart, Paras has decided to cast his lot with his erstwhile adversaries. Such is the unpredictable nature of Philippine politics.

Back from the abyss

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

CONGRATULATIONS to Dr. Amelou Benitez Reyes, who was installed yesterday as the eighth president—the fourth alumna to be so named—of the Philippine Women's University System.

Amelou, who used to chair the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW), says the thrust of her administration is "to build a faith community, upgrade academic standards for global competitiveness, anchored on character formation steeped with values and virtues for transformative leadership in creating a new world and culture of peace for sustainable development."

Amelou has long been a staunch supporter of women's causes, one who worked hard to propagate the proper place of "herstory," that is, history told from a woman's perspective and highlighting the role of women in historical events, in academic and political discourse.

That's why I'm particularly gratified that she should take over the helm of PWU today, the university being one of the first educational institutions in the land that sought to provide higher education of the highest standards to Filipino women.

Once more, congratulations to Amelou and to PWU for upholding and promoting Filipino women of the highest caliber!

* * *

THE COUNTRY is in crisis. Even as people live in constant fear of violence and terrorism, the economy is in a shambles, reeling under the twin evils of recession and hyperinflation.

The chaos is reflected in the tax situation. Revenues from tax collection account for only 5 percent of the GDP, clearly insufficient to meet the country's development objectives, not to mention making a dent on the ballooning deficit.

Taxation is in a "chaotic" state, what with over a hundred taxes in place, imposing high rates on all sorts of income, but with tax collection forever falling short of targets. Though the official tax rates are astronomical, there's also a lot of room for exoneration of taxes and the granting of incentives to a lucky few.

Even as government tries desperately to improve tax collection, for the few willing to pay the right taxes, following the complicated procedures, the seemingly "perpetual steps" it takes to have one's taxes evaluated and paid, is a nightmare.

Meanwhile, employees of the tax collection agency live lives of contradiction. Salaries are low, on average the equivalent of a mere $40 a month. And yet, they seem perfectly content with their measly salaries and in fact appear to be thriving, living in huge houses, driving around in the latest model cars and able to afford at least four personal drivers each.

The Philippines circa 2003? Not really. That's a description of Peru's economy and taxation system at the end of the 1980s and the start of the 1990s. But it does sound very familiar, if not disconcerting, doesn't it? That's why the lessons shared by Manuel Estela, former head of the Peruvian tax administration authority or Sunat, are especially instructive for Filipinos.

While he believes there is no "universally applicable" prescription for tax issues, the brief diagnosis he shares of Peru at the beginning of the Fujimori administration sounds so similar to our own situation that his solutions must somehow be of use to us.

* * *

ESTELA, who before heading Sunat had spent most of his working life as an economist with Peru's Central Reserve Bank, recalls a conversation he had with former President Fujimori at the time the position was offered to him.

Turning down the offer, Estela told the president that collecting taxes in Peru was an "impossible task," mainly because those who wielded the biggest economic power and therefore should be the biggest taxpayers, were able to avoid their obligations because they also had political power in their grasp. Fujimori's reply: "I don't have a commitment to anyone. And you?"

Reassured that Sunat would be protected from political pressure, Estela gathered a group of 18 experts, from finance people to auditors, from lawyers to social scientists, to study Peru's complicated and corrupt tax system and offer solutions. Highlights of the diagnosis: the tax system was "characterized by a very large number of taxes, but coupled with extensive exemptions and incentives. In this way, the high nominal rates actually became minimal effective rates. Even more, legal mechanisms then in place allowed endless delays, and also fostered tax avoidance and evasion."

The human dimension of the problem was not neglected. Their study found that "the administration had insufficient human capital and lacked computer support." The tax collection authority did not direct the collection process (which was subject to all sorts of pressures) and whatever control it exercised was very weak.

* * *

THE TEAM then decided that the first step to take was to reduce the number and type of taxes imposed on Peruvians. From over a hundred taxes, Estela says they recommended that these be reduced to four: income tax, VAT, excise taxes and tariffs.

With the proper legislation, the byzantine tax code was likewise modified, seeking a balance between what Estela calls "the duties of taxpayers and of the state," and spelling out "clear infractions and sanctions and ensuring the implementation of these sanctions."

How did they manage to pull off such drastic reforms (I'll discuss the reengineering of the bureaucracy tomorrow)? Estela smiles, noting that "the economic and social framework was critical," and, quoting a noted Peruvian historian, remarks: "It's the human condition that people are willing to face change only when they're facing the abyss."

And Sunat is now part of Peruvian history precisely for helping pull back the country from the abyss of economic disaster.

Message from the 'Bismarck'

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

"AN ETERNAL reminder of the time when the world went mad."

This is the message. It behooves us, during this season of war jitters, to listen.

On Discovery Channel these past days was "James Cameron's Expedition: Bismarck," a two-hour documentary on the deep-sea expedition to find the sunken dreaded World War II ship that was the "embodiment of Hitler's huge ego." Cameron is none other than the award-winning director of "Titanic."

When I was a kid I got to watch the war movie "Sink the Bismarck!" My parents brought us to see the film. It was a must-see for them, for us. I remember little of the sea battle but the exclamatory title has remained in my memory. It was later, in History class, that I understood. I remember better "A Night to Remember," the black-and-white classic on the sinking of the Titanic. No Kate Winslet and Leonardo DiCaprio there, but the film got five stars.

In a way, Cameron has done two remakes. He has tackled both famous ships—one a luxury liner, the other a battleship. One a 1990s remake of the Titanic's going down, the other a 2002 actual search of the sunken sea monster.

Cameron's "Bismarck" is more than just a documented high-tech search. It is a film, it is real-TV. Like what he did in "Titanic" where an elderly fictitious "survivor" of the tragedy opened the film to reminisce awhile before Winslet burst into the scene and brought us back to 1912, Cameron brought on board the real expedition, two 80-ish German survivors from the Bismarck, two of the lucky few from Hitler's navy.

It was not the feat of technology that awed me, although seeing humans, including the Bismarck historian, descending 15,000 feet inside a submersible was indeed amazing. It was the meaning of it all, brought forth through the reenactments, animated graphics and real war footage and sound of spoken words that made it all so true-to-life.

"We must sink the Bismarck!" British Prime Minister Winston Churchill's actual voice crackled from the radio. Those words became immortal like "I shall return." There was Hitler, too, straight out of Leni Riefenstahl's footage that showed the Hitler-worshipping throng. Heil!

Cameron should have brought on board Riefenstahl, the amazing filmmaker who gave us all those awesome Hitler scenes. Some years ago the German Embassy showed a documentary on her and her opus on the Nazi era. She had just turned 90 then and was still filming tribes in Africa and scuba diving, too.

In May 2002 Cameron led the expedition for a detailed external survey of the German battleship Bismarck which, for 61 years, has lain at the bottom of the North Atlantic.

Displacing 52,600 tons, the Bismarck was bigger than the Titanic. It was named after the first chancellor of the German Empire. In 1941, the ship was sighted off Norway by a British aircraft. The British Home Fleet tried to intercept it. The Bismarck demolished one ship and escaped into the open sea. It was sighted again and bombarded incessantly. Three torpedoes from the Dorsetshire hit the Bismarck and are said to have caused its sinking. Cameron's expedition revealed something else.

The Discovery website has a Q&A where Cameron bares his thoughts on the expedition. The sinking of the Bismarck, Cameron says, was a major event in history. It serves as a monument. "As a society we have to force ourselves to remember the past, and films and documentaries are dramatic reminders. We must not forget, for example, the many thousands of young men who died on that ship, and the thousands of others who also died on other ships opposing the Bismarck before it was brought down to the netherworld, that place of darkness where it now rests."

Exploring that netherworld were humans and a roving camera on leash. It was eerie. A sturdy German boot was lying on the sand. The deadly turrets, separated from the ship upon impact on the sea floor, were silent, encrusted with ocean minerals.

For Cameron and the crew, the project was not just a ship story or a forensic analysis of the wreck. It was a human story. "And our doorway to the human story was being able to communicate with survivors—two of whom accompanied us on the expedition—and listen to their personal accounts...what it felt like to be a crew member on what was believed to be an invincible ship."

Sixty-one years later, on May 27, on the same date and hour, and on the same spot, the expedition paused to pay respect to the dead. The two survivors tossed a wreath to the sea. They made their German salutes, embraced each other, shed tears.

Old photographs washed on the screen. Young blond German crewmen floating, looking up (the shots were taken from above) from the boiling sea toward their rescuers, English lads as young as themselves.

They were treated well, recalled the survivor who worked in the communications room of the Bismarck. His lament: "Our countries were enemies at that time, now we are friends. Couldn't we have been friends back then?"

Their cry: "Never again." These two gentle men who, in their youth, were among the Hitler-jungen, ready to die for the Fuhrer.

There was a lot that Cameron said about the technology that accompanied them to the ocean's dark depths. A lot was discovered about the last moments of Hitler's sailing behemoth. But it was those moments with the two aging survivors looking out to the blue Atlantic, it was their stirring words about war and senseless death that brought home the message of the sea where lie the remains of the Bismarck.

Never again.

* * *

Send comments to cerespd@info.com.ph

My best decision

YOUNG BLOOD

Pawee Geli

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

WHEN I first found out that I was pregnant, I was scared. It was totally unplanned. There were so many things I wanted to do and becoming a mother was not among my priorities. I was faced with so many questions: What was my future going to be? Would my family ever accept me again? Was my son's father going to be there for me?

I was sure only of one thing: I was going to have my baby, no matter what.

Well, things ended with my son's father not being around. Although there were occasional phone calls, e-mails and messages, it was like a wall had been put up between us now. I guess he was not ready to be a father yet, and I learned to accept that. So I moved back to my hometown, back to my parents' house to deliver my son and raise him.

Life did not become a bed of roses after that. I struggled through months of post-partum depression, feelings of insecurity and rejection. I was broke and had to rely on my parents for support.

Even today, there are moments when I still cry: during sleepless nights when my son is sick and I have no one to hold on to; during trying times when the burden of raising my son seems to be overwhelming.

Such days are becoming few and far between. I look forward to a time when there is no more hurt and sadness in my heart. And I know I am almost there.

Two years after I found out that I was pregnant and I decided to have my baby, I know I made the best decision in my life. Just hearing my son call me "Mama," seeing him run to me when I get home from work, seeing my parents take him around the city at night are enough to make me forget what I went through. I am filled with joy every time he reaches a milestone in his young life and I am filled with wonder as I see his personality emerging. These blessings far outweigh the heartaches, the emotional and physical pain of the past.

To anyone out there who is facing the same situation I was in two years ago, look up and look forward to a life ahead with your baby. Although it is going to be an uphill struggle, you will surely get to the top—and you'll have your baby to share that journey with.

Someday when my son asks me about our family, I am going to tell him that although we may not fit the description of an ideal family, just having the two of us, me and him, is perfect.

Pawee Geli, 29, works as a marketing officer for a software company.

Home at last

Dolores Chacker

OUR eyes locked for the very first time. He held my gaze for a while. I was not sure if he saw me as I was: a harried and harassed woman with puffy cheeks and swollen eyes. But in a span of a few seconds, I swear, he saw through me.

I was the first to look away. The intensity of that first encounter was too much for me to bear. Already I could feel tears forming in my eyes. I choked back an instinctive sob. It was a beautiful day and I refused to let my confusion get the better of me. Sure, I was young, much too young to be holding him in my arms, yet that didn't make me feel inadequate. Inexperienced, perhaps, but not inadequate. I couldn't believe age should deprive me of the pleasure of being part of such a glorious scenario: of mother and infant meeting only hours after delivery.

I struggled to hold back the tears, but it was too late. The moment had caught me off-guard, and I wasn't me anymore. It's as if I had been taken over by a completely new being, and perhaps in a sense I was. From then on, the person I thought I was ceased to exist. I had taken on a new role, a big leap from being a daughter, a sister, a friend. I was overcome by a series of emotions unfamiliar to me—apprehension, doubt and above all, a strong feeling of protectiveness.

My fears didn't leave me paralyzed. I tried to block them off instead. I swore that they would not enter my hospital room.

During the long drive home, I kept my eyes on him, eagerly anticipating any movement. His lips twitched, and I told myself it was actually a smile. "You're home," I whispered in reassurance. Somehow I found comfort in saying that, too.

Nothing prepared me for the days that followed. First, there were the many sleepless nights of tossing and turning, straining my ears for sounds that could indicate some discomfort on his part. Then I began to resent gaining weight, my stretch marks and losing my carefree ways to a paranoia that was slowly creeping inside me. Depression set in, and I longed for complete sleep, for peace of mind and for a normal teenage life.

But sometimes sleeping meant missing out on my little boy's firsts—the trade-off just wasn't worth it. As for peace of mind, that was just an excuse for cowards like me to escape the possibility of bringing meaning into an otherwise boring life. And what's normal nowadays—partying all night, getting drunk, sniffing drugs? Some girls probably just aren't cut out to fall for that charade.

Cheap thrills, I dismiss them with a smirk. But who was I kidding? Sometimes I sound as if I'm trying to convince myself. In a way, I suppose I am.

But after a while, it became easy, almost as though motherhood was second nature to me. And suddenly "No regrets" became more than just a cliché teenage mothers utter. For me, it became a reality. I had a deeper understanding of the truth and the sincerity behind what would have been empty words.

At night I shift from one position to another, trying to remember the now-blurry images of that fateful day four years ago when my son was first brought to me. And as I look back, an unconscious smile tugs at my lips, and I feel my hot-tempered disposition dissolve. I imagine myself as the little infant inside my mother's womb, lost and helpless, but enveloped in the most soothing calm. And it seems as if my son senses that, too.

My son and I are finally home.

Dolores Chacker, 20, is a 4th year BA Organizational Communication student at the University of the Philippines, Manila.

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Dreaming of a clean metropolis

I HAVE a dream that in the immediate future Metro Manila will be a paradise of cleanliness—spic and span!

I have a dream that national and local governments are encouraging proper waste segregation in their own kitchens as well as among their constituents.

I have a dream that the 1,573,408 households of Metro Manila are totally engaged in waste segregation (only 450,000 households are doing so now).

I have a dream that the chairpersons and council members of the 1,693 barangays in Metro Manila have persuaded their constituents to practice proper waste segregation.

I have a dream that the 1,139 subdivisions, townhomes and condominiums in Metro Manila are also engaged in waste segregation together with 1,914 schools.

I have a dream that the 180 markets and slaughterhouses are using digester tanks to convert their organic wastes into methane gas and using this gas in their foodstalls and slaughterhouses.

I have a dream that the 182 hospitals and medical clinics in Metro Manila are using the safe and environment-friendly hydromed method of converting toxic wastes into hollow blocks.

I have a dream that industrial and manufacturing plants are cleaning up their wastes, with the assistance of the Philippine Business for Environment.

I have a dream that the estimated 300,000 unusable rubber tires thrown annually into dumps are shredded and added to asphalt for use in the repair of roads.

I have a dream that all the residuals of the 1,573,408 households are converted into hollow blocks.

I have a dream that all unrecyclable packaging such as polystyrene and doy packs are a thing of the past as mandated by RA 9003.

I have a dream that the contribution of the Metro Manila Linis-Ganda to the underground economy in 2002 which stands at P4.8 million (representing the daily income of 2,000 eco-aides and bodega helpers and drivers) and the P231.6 million paid to the 450,000 households for 182,051 tons of recyclable garbage have increased threefold.

I have a dream that the Philippines is on its way to prosperity because the universal law of "cleanliness is next to Godliness" works, whether you believe it or not.

I can dream, can't I? How about you?

—LEONARDA N. CAMACHO,
commissioner, Unesco Philippines; executive vice president, Metro Manila Linis-Ganda c/o 215 Regency Park, 207 Santolan Rd., Quezon City

Criticizing the wrong party

I HAVE the greatest respect for the writings of Justice Isagani Cruz especially when he was still with the Supreme Court. In fact, I fully agree with his criticism of what was reported as my view on absentee voting.

Unfortunately, however, he was barking not only up a wrong tree but even a non-existent tree. What he was criticizing was a totally erroneous report of my view and possibly an erroneous report of what Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said about me.

For instance, he wrote: "Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr., citing an opinion of Fr. Joaquin Bernas and Secretary Blas F. Ople, both former members of the Constitutional Commission of 1986, says that Art. V, Sec. 1 of the Constitution, applies only to Filipinos residing in this country and not to those permanently residing elsewhere." Whether or not the senator said that, a check of my articles in Today on the subject will show that I never said that.

Again he wrote: "Ople and Bernas claim that it was decided in the Constitutional Commission not to exclude Filipino immigrants from the right of suffrage despite their acquisition of permanent residence in other countries." I do not know where this came from.

—JOAQUIN G.
BERNAS, S.J.,
bernas@admu.edu.ph

The selfish will vanish

SOME weeks ago, I saw an article in your newspaper which said that a United Nations survey showed that the world population is getting older.

The UN Population Control Commission must be very happy because this piece of news proves that its birth control programs are effective.

Preventing the birth of new human beings will necessarily result in an inverted pyramid of population profile by age group. And this is not good news for humanity, because this might mean its end. Already some nations are unsuccessfully coaxing their people to multiply—to no avail. Continuous negative population growth might lead to their extinction. If this trend continues unchecked, homo sapiens will truly be an endangered species.

There is the consoling fact, however, that only the selfish variety will vanish. The heroically generous ones will continue to populate the earth, thank God.

—BELLAFLOR P. GONZALES,
Singalong, Manila

How can we be for war?

THE CHINESE consider a new-born baby already one year old, counting the period that it was in his mother's womb. Such a system coincides with the stand of pro-lifers that life really begins at conception. Let us all be a year older!

Adding one year to one's chronological age may, however, pose a problem to those who do not want to talk about their age. A gracious admission of age is not something I would push since opposition to it could be as massive as the anti-war protests.

Seriously, under the dark clouds of an impending war in the Middle East, we should really be talking about life and its value anywhere, including Iraq and Mindanao.

How can we so easily support war which exterminates life, the environment and even civilizations?

Eliminating Saddam Hussein by attacking Iraq is like using defoliants to kill a mosquito, resulting in the destruction of the forest and other creatures.

Let us all age in space, if not also in prosperity. Oppose the US war in Iraq! Stop the killing in Mindanao!

—ARCHIMEDES S. MARQUEZ,
420 Gov. A. Pascual St.,
San Jose, Navotas, Metro Manila

'Sariling mundo'

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

LAST week I wrote about special children, kids who require more intensive care than usual from the family and other caregivers because the child's physical or mental development may be "slower" than usual. I've put "slower" in quotation marks because the term can be relative. The efforts to understand special children have spurred research in genetics, neurology, developmental psychology, with findings which should make us question our definitions about what is "normal."

Let's take autism as a starting point for discussions. The medical reference Merck Manual defines autism as "a disorder in which a young child can't develop normal social relationships, behaves in compulsive and ritualistic ways and usually fails to develop normal intelligence."

In extreme cases, a person with autism completely cuts himself (most cases of autism involve males) off from the world, compulsively pursuing particular interests and sometimes exhibiting amazing skills in a specific field, for example, painting, music or numbers. The term "idiot savant" has sometimes been used to describe autistic people with outstanding skills, for example, performing very complex mathematical operations without pen and paper.

Dustin Hoffman played a person with autism in "The Rain Man," showing how an autistic person can reach adulthood and function fairly well, but also sometimes infuriating people around them when they go into one of their compulsive phases, for example, memorizing phone numbers or addresses in a directory.

What's interesting is that researchers are now wondering if autism is part of a continuum of conditions that one would refer to as being a nerd or geek, people who you have to drag away from their books and computers.

A condition called Asperger Syndrome may be part of this continuum. People with this syndrome, like the autistic, are unable to read the human face and its emotions. Like the autistic, they exhibit compulsive behavior. Lawrence Osborne writes about the syndrome in his book "American Normal," describing children who would memorize entire TV shows word for word, or the address, phone number and zip code of every member of the US Congress.

Osborne describes people with Asperger Syndrome as possibly a form of "high-functioning autism." Unlike the autistic, people with with Asperger Syndrome score very well in intelligence tests. Osborne names Albert Einstein, Thomas Jefferson, the composer Bela Bartok and even Microsoft magnate Bill Gates as possibly having Asperger's.

Without doubt, there are many Filipino children with autism, or Asperger's, but many will be labeled "weird" or worse, "retarded" and "mentally unbalanced" because they are born into families without access to information about these conditions.

The labels of "normal" and "abnormal" are relative, almost arbitrary. Time magazine recently featured child prodigies and, when you think about it, there may be societies, including our own, where a child may be seen as abnormal, too, simply because he or she is "too bright."

Given this possible continuum of "geeky" conditions, we begin now to ask what exactly is "normal."

Tagalog offers us the phrase "*may sariling mundo* (having one's own world)" as a more appropriate description of these conditions. Having one's own world defies comparisons and labels of normal and abnormal.

In evolutionary terms, one can see that "geeky" conditions may in fact have been necessary for humanity to survive. I often wonder if perhaps it was Stone Age geeks—the autistic and Aspergers included—who discovered fire, or made the first tools or cave paintings. While our other "normal" ancestors were busy partying and having a good time, it was the geeks and nerds who would, with their own little worlds, go off staring at the stones and seeing a possible tool in them.

It's these geeks who make the world run, facts and figures dancing in their heads as they retreat into the laboratories that are their world. We usually think of geeks mainly as absent-minded scientists, but I am certain that among artists, there are many "high-functioning autistics" as well, people who see and hear differently, and are therefore able to produce those awesome paintings and symphonies and books. Why, sometimes (okay, often), I think many writers (throw in an occasional columnist) are probably high-functioning autistics, too.

Most geeks eventually adapt to society and the world. Special children are seen as more "difficult" because they resist the world. Yet even among these special kids, you'll find they're perhaps not that "abnormal," at least in relation to other children. I get stories all the time from parents of special children about how younger siblings seem to bond so well with a *kuya* or *ate* with Down's Syndrome, autism, or one of the other developmental "disorders."

I am certain this is because young children have not picked up biases about what's normal and what's not. After all, all children have their own worlds but learn to leave those worlds behind early in life. Sadly, becoming "normal" also often includes an acquisition of social prejudices, shunning others who are "different" and stay in their own worlds.

It may not be enough to just care for special children. As we become more enlightened, integrating them into society, we might discover more about what it means to be human. In living with special children or special adults, we learn not just to be tolerant of differences among people, but to tap into, and marvel at, the diversity of ways in which humans make sense of the world around us.

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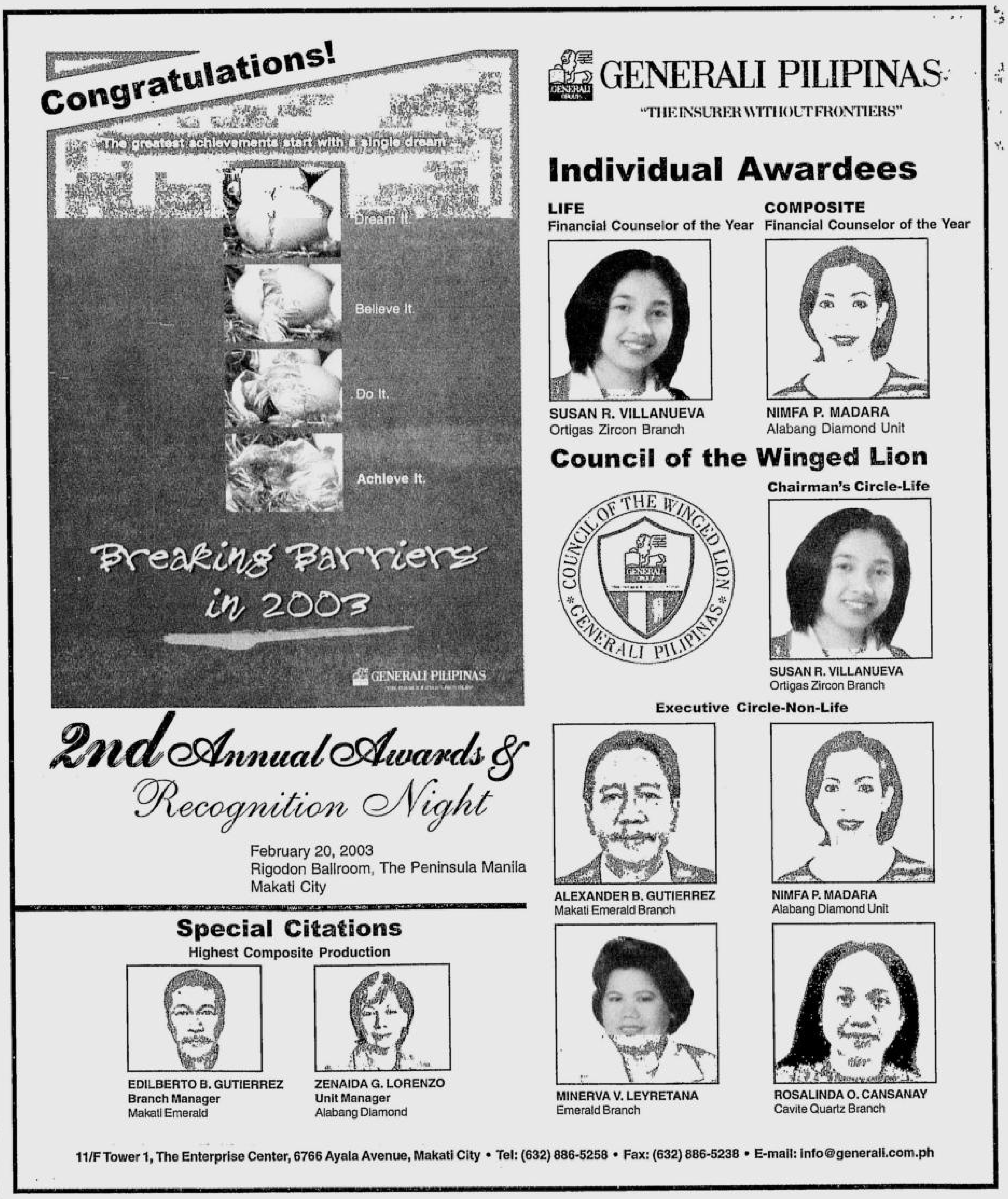

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US defends Agile program in RP: It's legal

From page A1

maturely leaked the the amendment measure to the Paris-based Financial Action Task Force, which rejected it before President Macapagal-Arroyo signed it into law.

But all seven Agile officials subpoenaed by the Senate did not attend the Question Hour.

Sen. Sergio Osmeña said only Agile's Filipino consultants could be subpoenaed again by the Senate because their American counterparts, being USAID agents, were enjoying diplomatic immunity.

He said the RP-US Agreement on Economic and Technical Cooperation signed in 1951 states that any matter relating to operations carried out pursuant to it should be raised in consultations between the two governments. This agreement was ratified by the Senate during the Quirino administration.

Explaining the absence of Agile officials at the Question Hour, Yates said the resolution earlier filed by Sen. Aquilino Pimentel referred to Agile's steering committee. Thus, Yates said, the DOF, Neda and USAID were the appropriate parties to address the Senate's concerns.

At the Question Hour, Bangko Sentral Governor Rafael Buenaventura said Agile was allowed to hold office at the second floor of the BSP building because its people had been working with BSP on certain projects.

He denied that his office had colluded with Agile to amend the Amla, and objected strongly to allegations that he had sabotaged the Philippines' efforts to get out of the FATF blacklist by updating it on the unofficial results of the bicameral conference committee report.

"Agile merely provided us technical assistance and information material," Buenaventura said. "It was the technical working group comprised mainly of government officials who worked together with Congress to amend the Amla. And in the end, it is the FATF that we have to deal with, and not Agile, when Congress failed to pass the amendments to the Amla."

Agile works with a steering committee composed of Finance Undersecretary Juanita Amatong, Margarita Songco of the Neda, Roman Azanza of the Capital Markets Development Committee, and Bernardo Villegas of the University of Asia and the Pacific.

Cut cleanly

Sen. Manuel Villar questioned the propriety of hiring foreign consultants on certain legislation.

He urged the Senate to ban Agile from the premises, saying that the group's agenda and activities were undermining the independence of Congress.

"Government officials have no business harboring foreign agents," Villar said. "These offices must cut, and cut cleanly, from Agile. I cannot fathom why a government office will give office space to a foreign lobby firm.

"When you hold office in the institution that you're trying to influence and dictate its policies, then that is no longer lobbying but a takeover."

Drilon said that while certain questions on Agile's operations must be explained, all these were side issues.

"We should not lose focus on the need for our laws, particularly the amendments to the Amla, to keep in step with the international standards of the banking community," Drilon said.

Sen. Panfilo Lacson urged his colleagues to decide whether to welcome technical assistance from foreign entities. "If not, then we have all the right to reject all," he said.

Sen. Robert Barbers said it would be better for both chambers of Congress to heed the standards set by the FATF "before it is too late."

He said those who opposed the amendments to the Amla must look at the bigger picture and "be patriotic enough."

Investigate

At the House, lawmakers are split on Agile.

Some lawmakers admitted that it had done consultancy work for various House committees and saw nothing wrong with this.

But Bayan Muna Representatives Satur Ocampo, Crispin Beltran and Liza Maza filed a resolution yesterday seeking a probe into the extent and nature of operations here of the Development Alternatives Inc (DAI), the main implementor of Agile.

The three party-list representatives sought the investigation in view of reports that DAI/Agile had been "actively pushing the USAID agenda by influencing the formulation of major Philippine legislation in Congress and directly intervening in policy reforms by maintaining satellite offices and contacts in at least 11 key government offices."

On Tuesday, Southern Leyte Rep. Aniceto Saludo charged that there was a conspiracy to railroad the National Authority for Revenue Administration (Nara) and the amendments to the Amla. He named Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho, Negros Occidental Rep. Julio Ledesma IV and Agile group as among the conspirators.

Ledesma said yesterday that he did not want to react to Saludo's accusation. He merely said his committee documents and reports were "all in order" and could be checked.

On Agile, Ledesma admitted that it was one of several agencies that his committee consulted when it was holding hearings on the matter.

Batanes Rep. Florencio Abad, one of the authors of the proposed Nara Act, said the fears raised against Agile were "overblown and exaggerated."

"It's up to us to determine whether to accept or reject advice from those who provide us technical consultancy," Abad said. "I don't think senators and congressmen can be manipulated." *With a report from Clarissa S. Batino*

CBCPsays some lawmakers blocking Amla hiding dirty money

From page A1

supportive of lawmakers who oppose the amendments on a matter of principle.

"Other senators are right in their stand. We are too pressured by foreign countries, financial institutions and 'super governments.'" he said. "I do not blame senators who honestly think that our sovereignty is being violated," he said.

Deadline set

The Paris-based Financial Action Task Force (FATF) on Friday recommended additional counter-measures against the Philippines beginning March 15 if government failed to plug what it calls loopholes in its laundering law.

Congress last week beat a Feb. 12 deadline to pass amendments, but the FATF, set up by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, said the new measures failed to address "previously identified deficiencies" in the law.

Opposition by some senators to an amendment allowing authorities to look into suspicious accounts, including money earned from graft, without a court order has resulted in the rejection by the FATF of the Amla amendments.

GMA arranges dialogue

Malacañang has arranged for FATF representatives to personally explain to the "doubting Thomases" in the Senate the consequences of the Amla's non-adherence to international standards.

President Macapagal-Arroyo said yesterday that FATF officials would be arriving "sometime soon."

"What we're trying to do is to put the FATF and the senators, the doubting Thomases together so they can understand one another and exchange ideas and come up with a solution that will be good for the Filipino people," she said during a luncheon with reporters.

She has called off the Legislative-Executive Advisory Council meeting scheduled today.

In facilitating the dialog, Ms Macapagal said it is better for the senators to directly hear from the FATF officials.

Senate reconsidering

The Senate last night agreed to reconsider its ratification of the Amla amendments and refer this back to the conference committee for further changes.

Sen. Francis Pangilinan made the motion after senators, constituting themselves into a committee of the whole, heard the views of Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Rafael Buenaventura on the issue during the "Question Hour."

But Senate President Franklin Drilon deferred the approval of another motion to appoint the same members of the Senate panel to the bicameral committee at the request of Minority Leader Vicente Sotto III who said he still has to confer with other minority senators.

During the "Question Hour," Buenaventura clarrified that the ratified Amla has not yet been rejected by the FATF.

Buenaventura said that no copy of the amendment law has been transmitted to the FATF and that he had asked the permission of Drilon and Speaker Jose de Venecia to present a copy to the FATF even without the signature of President Macapagal to know in advance whether the amendments would be accepted by the FATF.

Railroading

Leaders of the House of Representatives have agreed to reconsider the report in their respective chambers in order that new amendments, particularly those prescribed by the FATF, can meet the March 15 deadline for Manila to comply with the international standards in the fight against money laundering.

But House Minority Leader Carlos Padilla accused De Venecia of railroading the reconsideration of the report because when Majority Leader Neptali Gonzales II made this motion, there was not enough congressmen present for a quorum.

Gonzales defended the House move, saying that the minority was consulted before he issued a motion for the reconsideration of the bicameral conference committee report.

Gonzales said Makati City Rep. Agapito Aquino, deputy minority leader who was on the floor at the time, consented when asked on the majority's bid to reconsider the report.

Gonzales also stressed that both De Venecia and Drilon had agreed to move for the reconsideration of the report's ratification.

Unconstitutional

In a news conference, Padilla said that in the first place the move taken by the House leadership was in violation of the House rules and the Constitution.

The House cannot reconvene the bicameral conference committee in order to introduce amendments because Section 60 of the House rules only provides that the committee can be reconvened if the Senate and House versions have conflicting provisions, he said.

"The House and Senate are not fighting so the purpose for creating the bicameral conference committee does not exist," Padilla said.

He said this would be pointed out by the minority members sitting in the bicameral conference committee and thus, even make longer the discussions.

Iloilo Rep. Rolex Suplico said that the House move to reconsider the report violated the Constitution as Section 26 paragraph 2 and Article 6 barred amendments to be made after the last reading of a bill.

Zamboanga City Rep. Celso Lobregat, on the other hand, was sore that the House leadership did not allow members to discuss the reconsideration of the report when it was a sensitive issue.

Lobregat said that he believed the bicameral conference report was in "substantial compliance" with the FATF requirements.

Aside from approving the FATF requirement to reduce the threshold amount for banks to report transactions suspected of being involved in money laundering, Lobregat said the committee approved that no court order would be needed in opening bank accounts that may have money related to illegal drugs and terrorism.

He said the main objective of the FATF was to go after money related to drugs and terrorism.

Seek US help

The government has already called on the United States to "exercise its moral suasion on FATF members" to hold off looming sanctions, noting that this could hurt the economy.

Officials said those who would be directly affected are the more than seven million overseas Filipino workers, who would have difficulties sending home their salaries through the banking system. The Philippine economy relies heavily on the OFW's dollar remittances. *With a report from Dona Pazzibugan*

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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Man with history of mental illness admits setting off subway blaze

DAEGU, South Korea—Sobbing relatives scuffled with police here Wednesday demanding to know the fate of their loved ones after a subway inferno claimed at least 124 lives, as details emerged suggesting the scale of the tragedy could have been avoided.

Authorities warned that the death toll could climb further as 279 people were still listed as missing while 144 were injured.

Police said the the arson suspect, 56-year-old Kim Dae-hwan, a local man with a history of mental illness, had admitted setting the fire.

Witnesses said he sprayed flammable liquid from a plastic bottle inside one of the carriages of a train at a downtown subway stop just before 10 a.m. Tuesday.

Within minutes a blaze swept through the entire six-carriage train and engulfed another six-carriage train standing next to it.

"He admitted he did it," police detective Choi Woong-Ju said. "He said he thought there was no use living any more and that he had decided to die and take other people with him."

President Kim Dae-jung ordered a full investigation as details emerged suggesting that lapses in safety standards contributed to the scale of the tragedy.

Some 200 relatives confronted police and city government officials as South Korean Prime Minister Kim Sok-Soo toured the city that has been declared a disaster area by the central government, witnesses said.

Investigators meanwhile launched a probe into possible human error and security lapses that may have contibuted to the disaster.

One day after an arson attack gutted two trains, fewer than 30 bodies have been identified, and anger is building among thousands of people awaiting news about missing family members.

Daegu City mayor Cho Hae-nyong said the death toll, which had fluctuated wildly in the hours after the tragedy, stood at 124 Wednesday after 72 bodies were recovered from the wreckage later Tuesday.

"A total of 124 people are confirmed dead," said the mayor, adding that he believed that all bodies had been counted.

The figure of 279 missing is expected to fall in the coming days as the dead are identified, the 144 injured fully taken into account and unrelated missing persons are excluded, he explained.

"The missing reports are still coming in. We have to think about those figures separately from the dead. It looks like all the dead have been counted," said the mayor.

According to media reports and experts, no sprinklers were installed in the Daegu station, fireproof materials were absent and materials used on the trains, including plastics, were known to emit toxic fumes when burned.

Most victims of the inferno died from smoke inhalation, according to rescue services.

Also, soon after the fire broke out on the train, the station's power system automatically shut down, plunging the station in darkness, trapping passengers inside trains and effectively signing their death warrants, according to some media accounts.

In addition, the second train arrived at the station several minutes after the blaze had started. Subway officials had time to stop it before it reached the station, or send it on its way without stopping. *AFP*

RELATIVES of victims in a subway fire give vent to their anguish during a visit to the burnt out carriages at a subway main depot in Taegu, southern South Korea, Feb. 19.

REUTERS

US officials listing what can go wrong in Iraq war

NEW YORK—Senior Bush administration officials are for the first time openly discussing what could go wrong not only during an attack on Iraq but also in the aftermath of an invasion, The New York Times reported on Tuesday.

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld has a typewritten list of risks, according to The Times. He refers to it constantly, updating it with his ideas and suggestions from senior military commanders, and discusses it with President (George W.) Bush, the newspaper said.

The list includes a "concern about Saddam Hussein using weapons of mass destruction against his own people and blaming it on us, which would fit a pattern," Rumsfeld told The Times.

He said the document also noted that Saddam "could do what he did to the Kuwaiti oil fields and explode them, detonate, in a way that lost that important revenue for the Iraqi people."

Rumsfeld's list also warns of Saddam hiding his weapons in mosques, hospitals or cultural sites and using citizens or captured foreign journalists as human shields, according to the report.

The risks, Rumsfeld told The Times, "run the gamut from concerns about some of the neighboring states being attacked, concerns about the use of weapons of mass destruction against those states or against our forces in or out of Iraq."

A senior Bush administration official told the Times there is uncertainty about how US forces will be received.

According to his aides, President Bush has to prepare the country for what one senior official calls "the very real possibility that this will not look like Afghanistan," a military victory that came with greater speed than any had predicted, and with fewer casualties, the report said. *Reuters*

Washington dismisses Pyongyang's armistice threat

WASHINGTON—The United States Tuesday dismissed North Korea's threat to pull out of an armistice pact that has secured peace for half a century, warning again it would not bow to nuclear blackmail from the Stalinist state.

In its latest rhetorical blast at Washington, Pyongyang accused the United States of infringing the deal that halted the 1950-53 Cold War conflict, and said it may not stick to its terms.

The warning did not provoke much surprise in Washington, following a flurry of dire threats from North Korea's communist leadership, as it apparently seeks to turn up the heat to force President George W. Bush's administration to enter negotiations.

"What you've seen is a rather predictable series of escalatory statements from North Korea," said White House spokesperson Ari Fleischer.

"This remains an issue for the international community to deal with, and that remains our approach.

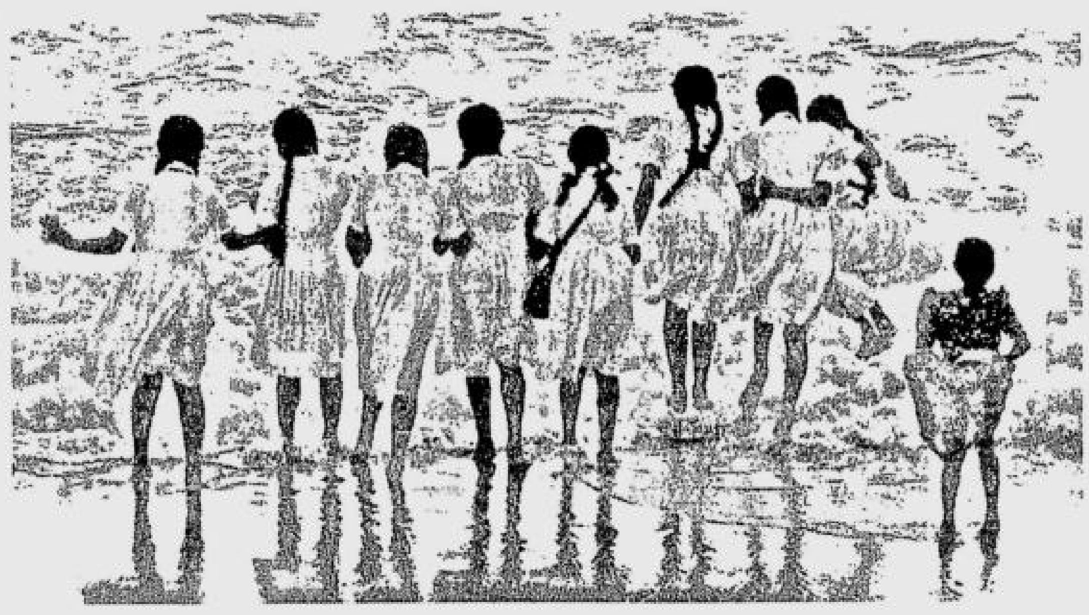
"I think you always have to react somewhat judiciously to the statements that North Korea makes. There is a lengthy history of bravado to some of their statements."

A State Department official, meanwhile, said North Korea was going about things the wrong way if it wanted to entice Washington to the negotiating table.

"The United States will not respond to threats, broken commitments or blackmail by North Korea," the official said on condition of anonymity.

The United States has said it is willing to talk directly to Pyongyang, but only about how it can stand down the twin nuclear programs at the center of a crisis that erupted last year.

It also said it is working with allies South Korea, Japan and Australia, friends in China and Russia, the UN Security Council and the International Atomic Energy Agency to find a peaceful solution to the drama. *AFP*



FUN IN A TIME OF TRUCE

Young Sri Lankan schoolgirls play on one of the many beaches in the capital Colombo's Galle Face on Feb. 18. Sri Lanka will mark the first anniversary of a truce between the government and Tamil Tiger rebels on Saturday.

REUTERS

Mystery ruby sparks international row

BANGKOK—A ruby reportedly worth $207 million and smuggled out of Burma has become the center of international dispute involving an ex-diplomat from Laos, a Singapore-based company and a former Thai police general, officials said Wednesday.

The 21.8-kg uncut gemstone made headlines when Singapore's Straits Times newspaper reported Monday that it disappeared last year from the vault of the Siam Commercial Bank in Bangkok.

The Thai Foreign Ministry confirmed that UPF Co. in Singapore lodged a complaint with Thailand in January claiming it had reached agreement with Khamphanh Panyavong, a representative of the Laos government, to build a railway line in Laos on condition he deposit the ruby in the bank as a guarantee.

The Laos Embassy in Bangkok denied it had awarded any contract to the firm, adding that Khamphanh resigned from the diplomatic corps years ago and no longer had any links to the government.

The bank, meanwhile, issued a statement that a ruby was safely stored in its vault but not in the name of UPF. And gem experts questioned whether the ruby was real.

Then another player surfaced.

"The ruby is mine. I bought it from a Karen trader seven years ago, when such rubies were being smuggled out of Burma," a retired police officer, Maj. Gen. Niyom Krailart, told reporters Wednesday. Myanmar, also known as Burma, is famed for its rubies and other gems. *AP*

Chavez, foes to forsake violence

CARACAS—Embattled Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez and opposition forces pushing for him to cut short his term will sign a non-violence pact Tuesday, the mediating head of the Organization of American States said.

OAS chief Cesar Gaviria, who has been mediating with the parties since Nov. 8, said the sides were ready to sign the "pro-peace, pro-democracy" accord.

"We have completed a negotiating and dialogue process on the release of a statement against violence, in favor of peace and democracy... which will be signed tomorrow," he told reporters Monday.

Political tensions have run extremely high since April, when the leftist-populist elected president was briefly ousted for 47 hours. There have been almost 70 political killings here, in addition to massive rallies against and in defense of his government. *AFP*

Israel forces invade Gaza Strip, kill 11

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip—Israeli tanks and soldiers battled Palestinian gunmen in the streets of Gaza City early Wednesday, killing 11, including a suicide bomber who tried to blow up a tank, Palestinians said, the bloodiest incursion in three weeks.

The Israelis left considerable destruction behind when they pulled out of the area around 5 a.m., more than six hours after about 40 tanks entered Shajaiyeh neighborhood. Palestinians said the Israelis destroyed three houses and two metal workshops, damaged a school and ripped out electricity cables.

The incursion was the second since the violent Islamic Hamas took responsibility for blowing up an Israeli tank Saturday, killing four soldiers.

Israeli media have speculated that the Israeli move against Hamas would involve a large-scale incursion into Gaza, a step the Israelis have avoided during more than two years of fighting.

Three of the dead were in a car machine-gunned by soldiers, Palestinians said. It was the highest death toll in a single operation since Jan. 26, when 12 Palestinians were killed in an Israeli invasion in another part of Gaza City. *AP*

Tests indicate Australia bones not really that old

SYDNEY—Australia's oldest man has gotten younger—22,000 years younger.

A new barrage of tests on the ancient remains of "Mungo Man," a skeleton discovered in southeastern Australia in 1974, show he died 40,000 years ago, not 62,000 years ago as had been suggested, a scientist said Wednesday.

The bones have been contentious ever since their discovery, with their exact age the subject of intense debate.

A female skeleton found nearby five years earlier and known as "Mungo Woman" was also dated at about 40,000 years old—older than previously thought—by a team led by scientists at Melbourne University.

Their findings were to be published in the Feb. 20 issue of the respected international science journal "Nature."

"The ages paint a new picture of the human and climatic history of Australia," said geologist Jim Bowler, the man who discovered the skeletons and who is now a Professorial Fellow with the University of Melbourne.

"Australia's colonization is one of the keys to our understanding of how Homo sapiens evolved and spread around the world," Bowler said in a statement. "It is critical we get the story correct."

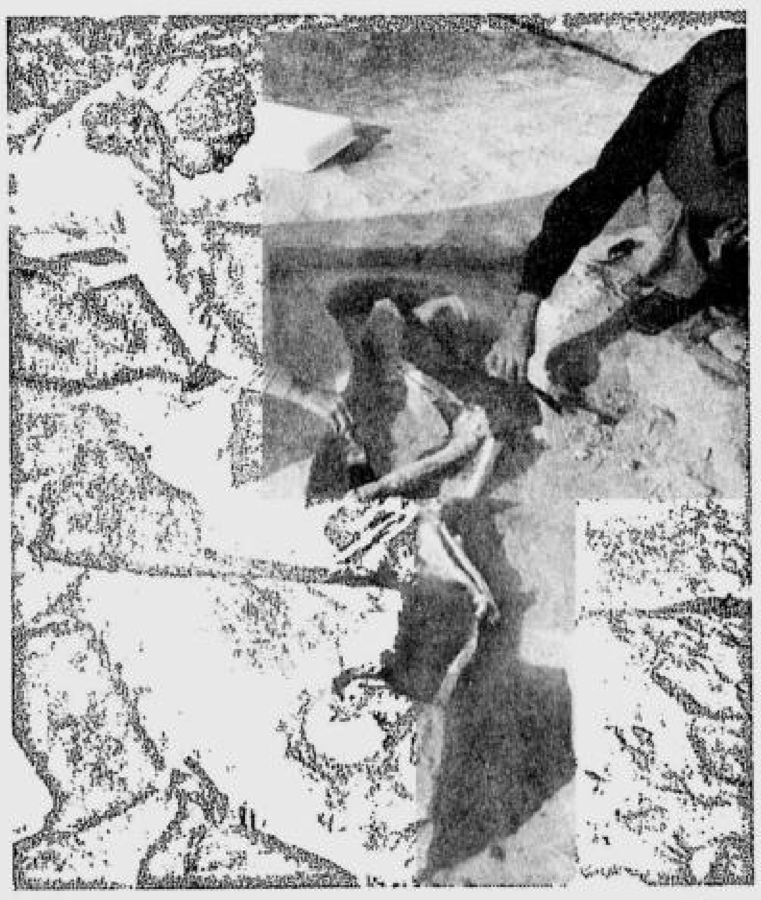
In 1999, researchers at the Australian National University sparked heated global debate on the origins of human beings when they said tests on the skeleton and its sandy grave showed Mungo Man was 62,000 years old.

That date suggested that Australia was home to a group of anatomically modern Aboriginal people much earlier than thought.

In a paper in the American journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, anthropologist Dr. Alan Thorne of the Australian National University said the DNA findings cast doubt on the so-called Out of Africa model of human evolution.

That model proposes that all living people are descended from a group of modern Homo Sapiens who left their African homeland 150,000 years to 100,000 years ago. The group and their descendants spread around the world, replacing existing populations of older peoples, including Neanderthals and Homo Erectus.

In the latest contribution to the debate, Bowler amassed a team of experts from universities and scientific organizations across Australia and four separate dating laboratories to achieve a final consensus, he said in his statement. *AP*



DR. WILFRED Shawcross, right, and the late Anthea Carstairs, left, excavate the remains on the "Mungo Man" in this 1974 photo taken in Lake Mungo, 1000 km west of Sydney, Australia.

AP

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NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU
Room 201, Bonuan Apartelle
10 Happy Glen Loop, Baguio City
Tel. No. (074)443-9255
Fax No. (074)443-8971
E-mail: inq_baguio@inquirer.com.ph

SOUTHERN LUZON BUREAU
23 Aurora St., Old Albay District
Legazpi City
Tel. No. (052) 820-8402
Fax No. (052) 820-1274
E-mail: inq_bicol@inquirer.com.ph

Across the NATION
E-mail: pr_provincial_news@inquirer.com.ph
Assistant Editor **Tony Bergonia**

VISAYAS BUREAU
c/o Cebu Daily News
18-15 Escario St., Cebu City
Tel. Nos. (032) 233-0346/233-0349
Fax No. (032) 232-9938
E-mail: pdivis@skyinet.net

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Ecleo arraigned for wife's murder

By Jolene R. Bulambot and Suzzane B. Salva
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—Finally, the wheels of justice has started to grind. Cult leader Ruben Ecleo Jr. was arraigned yesterday, eight months after a parricide case was filed against him for the killing of his wife, Alona Bacolod-Ecleo.

But Ecleo refused to enter a plea before Judge Generosa Labra of the Regional Trial Court Branch 23.

Clad in an orange polo shirt, blue jeans and black leather shoes, Ecleo calmly told the court: "I refuse to enter my plea."

Judge Labra entered a plea of not guilty for Ecleo and set a pretrial conference on March 5.

Orlando Salantandre, Ecleo's lawyer, said his client continues to question the venue of the trial, adding that the case should be tried in a court near Dalaguete, Cebu where Alona's body was found.

Private prosecutor Arbet Sta. Ana Yongco said the objection was just a dilatory tactic. She said the matter was not raised when Ecleo petitioned the Supreme Court to transfer the hearings to Manila. The High Tribunal junked the petition.

" Why didn't they question that before when it was more important than the petition for transfer?" Yongco asked.

Ecleo, "supreme master" of the Philippine Benevolent Missionaries Association (PBMA) is charged with killing Alona, 27, on Jan. 5, 2002.

Alona's body was put in a garbage bag and dumped in a ravine along the road in Barangay Coro, Dalaguete, about 85 km south of this city.

Ecleo was arrested on June 18, five months later, on Dinagat Island after a gunfight between his supporters and policemen that killed 16 PBMA members. While the clash went on, a lone suspect gunned down four members of the Bacolod family including the parents of Alona in Mandaue City, Cebu.

The surviving members of the Bacolod family blamed the carnage on Ecleo, a charge that the cult leader has denied.

Security was tight for Ecleo's first court appearance since his arrest.

A van carrying him was followed by a convoy of six vehicles from the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology, the Cebu City Police Office and the Special Weapons and Tactics unit.

More than 200 police stood by at the Marcelo Fernan Hall of Justice for the duration of Ecleo's arraignment.

At least 200 people were at the Palace of Justice before 8 a.m. to see Ecleo but Ecleo was led to the back of the building.

Along the hallway stood members of the PBMA and the Crusade Against Violence (CAV) who went through a routine check of their belongings and were subjected to body frisking.

25 arrested as police try to break mine strike

BAGUIO CITY—At least 25 people were arrested on Wednesday when policemen broke through the barricade of striking workers of the Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. (LCMC) in its mine site in Mankayan, Benguet.

At around 9 a.m. Wednesday, police struck at the barricade to allow an LCMC supply van to enter the Tubo access tunnel.

"These were supplies for the mine workers who stayed behind to protect and operate the tunnels. We cannot completely abandon any of the tunnels because we need to sustain exhaust operations in order to ensure that underground poisonous gases are expelled. Otherwise, these will endanger our workers when they get back into the tunnels," said Glenn Batilando, LCMC environment manager.

Batilando said their supply van was followed by trucks "carrying 100 mine workers, who have decided to go back to work."

He said their reports indicated that the 25 arrested strikers "were not employees or wives or siblings of our workers, and are being held by the police on charges of obstructing the national road."

The violence occurred just as talks drew closer to a settlement of the first labor strike to hit LCMC.

Union members struck on Feb. 2 over company policies, which included a compulsory work rule for all workers during Christmas.

Batilando and LCMC lawyers drew up seven agreements with Ernesto Dulag, Llosu president, and Panelo Ambas, LEU president, on Tuesday at the Cordillera office of the National Conciliation and Mediation Board. *Vincent Cabreza and Desiree Caluza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Cebu drivers seek fare hike

CEBU CITY—Two transport groups here are demanding a P1.50 hike in jeepney fares following a series of oil price adjustments.

The Alyansa sa mga Nagkahiusang Drivers-Operators Alang sa Reporma (Andar) and the Nagkahiusang Draybers sa Sugbo would file separate petitions before the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board within the week.

Jaime Moncada, Andar spokesperson, said the plan to hike fares was put on hold because a few members were afraid of adverse reaction from commuters and the public.

"We could no longer afford not to increase fare because oil companies have raised their prices of oil and diesel several times this month," Moncada said.

Data from the Consumer and Oil Price Watch showed that Petron and Pilipinas Shell Petroleum raised diesel prices twice this month.

The first was 39 centavos on Feb. 3 and 50 centavos on Feb. 16. *Jolene R. Bulambot, PDI Visayas Bureau*

MILF to Army on Salamat: 'Catch him if you can'

COTABATO CITY—"Catch him if you can."

This was Moro Islamic Liberation Front spokesperson Eid Kabalu's message to government soldiers who are out to arrest the rebel group's chieftain, Salamat Hashim.

"We know all along that the Philippine Army and Marines are after Chairman Salamat (Hashim)," Kabalu told the INQUIRER.

When asked whether the MILF forces that clashed with government soldiers had Salamat's directive, Kabalu said the guerrillas were just defending themselves.

"Our chairman is no longer in his safe house in Barangay Buliok when the military started building its forces around the Liguasan marsh," he said.

Maj. Gen. Generoso Senga, 6th Infantry Division chief, admitted that the MILF chief was not in his "headquarters" when elements of the 7th Marine Battalion Landing Team captured the two-story, highly fortified house of the rebel leader on Saturday afternoon.

"They (military) could not get him," said Kabalu, who would not say the exact location of Salamat.

"He is just there, very near to his supporters and he can be reached by our communication facilities," he said, adding: "He is just a phone away."

But Maj. Julieto Ando, spokesperson of the 6th ID, said the objective of the Pikit offensive was not to arrest Salamat.

"We ran after kidnappers and lawless groups, the MILF was there so they got involved," Ando said.

"Catch him if you can," Kabalu said addressing himself to the Army.

On Monday, Armed Forces chief of staff Gen. Dionisio Santiago admitted that the Army was after the MILF after all.

He was quoted as saying that the military had to neutralize MILF fighters who are protecting members of the Pentagon kidnap for ransom gangs and other lawless groups.

Ghazali Jaafar, MILF political affairs chief, said from the start they knew they were the main target of the offensive. *Edwin O. Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Consumers demand Napocor payment for lake, river use

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—An electric consumers group in Lanao del Sur has urged a local court in Marawi City to stop the National Power Corp. from collecting payments for their electric consumption unless the Napocor settled a P10 billion debt for the use of Lake Lanao and Agus River.

The Ranao Consumers Movement (Rancom) also wanted Napocor to refund power consumers in the province "for its illegal collection of fuel cost adjustment and power purchase adjustment."

Lawyer Macapanton Abbas Jr., Rancom lead counsel, said under the National Wealth Taxes law, Napocor was mandated to pay the provincial government 1 percent of the income it would derive from the use of Lake Lanao and Agus River.

But he said for the past 10 years, Napocor failed to comply with that requirement.

Abbas said the Napocor claimed it has paid P300 million to the province.

"But the truth is it only (paid) P15 million while provinces outside the host Lanao Sur have been receiving more than that," he said. *Grace Cantal-Albasin, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

ROUNDUP

Case dismissed

SOLANO, Nueva Vizcaya—A judge on Feb. 12 dismissed a petition of residents to stop the construction of a tower of Globe Telecommunications Inc. in Barangay Quirino here. In his decision, Judge Jose Rosales of the regional trial court cited the failure of the residents to substantiate their allegations of health, safety and security risks that would be brought about by the operation of the tower. Earlier, several residents sought a temporary restraining order to stop the construction of the cell site tower that started in May last year.

Ben Moses Ebreo, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Village chief killed

IBA, Zambales—Suspected New People's Army rebels gunned down a village chief in front of his wife and their two-year-old son in Barangay Sta. Barbara here last week, police reports said. Reports identified the victim as Mario Payumo, 38, barangay captain of Sta. Barbara and president of the Association of Barangay Captains in this town. His assailants took Payumo's M-14 Armalite rifle, a shotgun, a cellular phone and a handheld radio, reports said.

Cesar Villa, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Cop surrenders

BAGUIO CITY—A policeman, who was among the suspects in the murder of four residents of San Juan, Abra, in October last year, surrendered to the police last week. PO1 Joselito Tagudar said he surrendered because he wanted to clear his name. He denied participation in the killing and said he was in his post in Camp Dangwa in Benguet during the killing. Police reports said that three men fired at a crowd of residents of Barangay Barbarsik who were attending a wake on Oct. 4. Killed instantly were eight-year-old Rogie Montorio and Erik Pacurza, Algie Pacurza and John Bersamin. At least 12 other people were hurt.

Frank Cimatu, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

NPA rebels captured

CAMP OLIVAS, Pampanga—Two members of a New People's Army hit squad targeting top military officials were captured recently in Nueva Ecija. They were identified as Cesar Santos, alias Ka Jay-ar, and Mar Esguerra, alias Ka Deo, both of Rizal town. Col. Jovenal Narcise, commander of the Army's 702nd Infantry Brigade, said the two rebels were captured after soldiers raided their safehouse in Barangay Poblacion in Rizal. Narcise said one Magiting Badua, alias Ka Meg or Randy, was wounded after a brief gunfight. Badua escaped by jumping into an irrigation canal during the gunfight.

Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Farmers' group bares papers on rice import mess

A GROUP of farmers yesterday released a set of documents which the group said shows that farmers' cooperatives backed by big rice traders were able to corner letters of credits that allowed them to import huge volumes of rice.

In a statement issued after a press conference, the National Confederation of Irrigators Association (NCIA) said the National Food Authority and Land Bank of the Phils (LandBank) approved the letters of credit of what the NCIA said were dubious farmers' groups.

NCIA spokesperson Silvestre Bonto, also head of the Bicol Region Confederation of Irrigation Association Inc., identified two of the farmers' groups as the Modern Farmers Multi-Purpose Cooperative (MPCI) and the Sto. Nino MPCI.

The two groups were able to avail themselves of a rice import allocation of 8,500 metric tons each on Jan. 16, 2003.

Bonto said records showed that while the Sto. Niño MPCI had been inactive for 10 years, the Modern Farmers MPCI is not a farmers' cooperative, but a company put up six months ago to supply farm equipment.

Rejection

While the NFA approved the import application of the two groups, it rejected the application of the Prosamape Cooperative in Bicol, a member of the NCIA which claims to have 820,000 individual farmers as members in 80 provinces.

The Prosamape application to import 3,000 metric tons of Vietnam rice worth $701,135 had been endorsed by the Ascot Commodities NV Geneva, the NCIA said in its statement.

In her state of the nation address last year, President Macapagal opened the importation of rice to legitimate farmers' groups and had ordered NFA head Arthur Yap to make sure that only farmers' cooperatives benefit from this importation program.

In yet another example of what NCIA said was an irregularity in the importation program, another cooperative, the Sison Pozorrubio MPC, was allowed to participate twice in the rice importation program with allocations of 10,000 and 8,000 metric tons in a span of a week, exceeding the quota of 10,000 metric tons set for a farmers' group.

The statement quoted Bonto as saying there is talk of a plan to derail the rice importation program to put back control over importation in the hands of big rice traders.

The NCIA earlier appealed to the NFA to relax its rules on letters of credit to allow legitimate farmers' groups to avail of the rice importation program.

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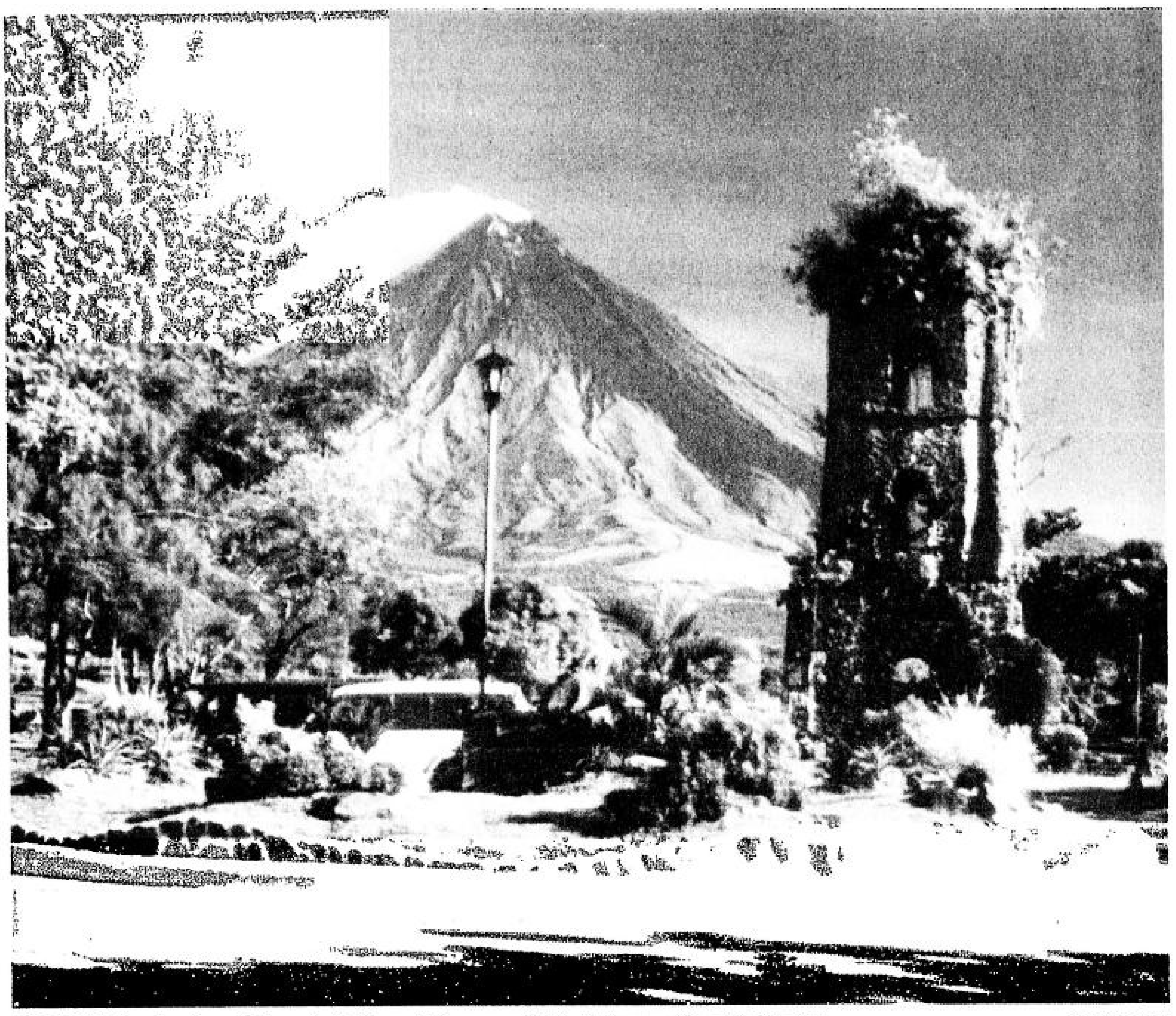
INQUIRER Southern Luzon
Editor Jun Bandayrel ◎ Bureau Chief Floreño G. Solmirano

Cagsawa: Monument of divine justice

By Roly Embile
Daraga, Albay



CAGSAWA Church ruins and the majestic Mayon Volcano remain Bicol's foremost tourist attraction. FREDDIE ROSAROS

THE SLIGHTLY stooped frame of the Most Rev. Teotimo Pacis cast a long shadow by the setting sun as he sprinkled holy water on the grass-covered field of the ruins of the Cagsawa Church in Daraga, Albay.

The gesture was part of a *responso* (prayer for the dead) that the bishop used to do after each Mass at dusk on every first Friday of the month, on top of the same makeshift altar of a half-buried volcanic rock the size of a car.

No one attended any of the Masses, save for a lone seminarian who served as his *sacristan*. Neither did the prelate explain to him, or to anyone else, the reason for such religious fervor until he died a few years later in the late 1970s.

The regularity and solemnity of the religious rites might as well be an act of expiation for the sins of over a thousand souls whose remains lay buried under tons of volcanic debris.

What remains of the belfry, made of hand-chiseled volcanic rocks and spared by the violent eruption of Mayon Volcano on Feb. 1, 1814, has since become the common gravestone of 1,200 persons who died during the cataclysm.

The incident also destroyed the entire *visita* (town center) of Cagsawa, then a thriving business district of Camalig town, and a sizable portion of the southeastern Albay.

Settlements

At the height of its power in the 12th century, the Sri Visaya Empire stretched its boundary to the southern Philippines and up north to the Bicol Peninsula.

Early traders and merchants coming to the region were so attracted by the beauty of Mayon and the richness of the soil in the area that they eventually opened several settlements. Among the more progressive settlements was Cagsawa, previously named Busay.

In 1565, the Spanish explorer Juan Salcedo claimed Cagsawa for the Spanish crown.

The village further flourished as a trading and business center under the Spaniards. It was shortly made a *visita* much like a satellite of Camalig town where a parish church was built.

Records at the Albay public archives show that the village became so prosperous that its church bells, inlaid with gold and silver, became the envy of other parishes. Marauding pirates from the southern Philippines and the Dutch also coveted the wealth of the village.

The affluence of the Busay pueblo also translated into lavish fiesta celebrations.

It was ironic that in the aftermath of the 1814 eruption of Mayon, resulting in its abandonment, the town was renamed Cagsaua. Two versions of how the name originated emerged.

Most modern-day residents of Daraga believe that Cagsaua was derived from the giant python *saua* which, some said, dwelled near the base of the belfry. In recent eruptions, as in 1984 and 2001, those living at the foot of the volcano said they saw large snakes coming out into the open from their hiding places.

Divine justice

Another, albeit unpopular, story was borne out of the stringent religious scruples at the time.

Among the survivors of the 1814 eruption, Francisco Aragoneses, the Franciscan parish priest, blamed the biggest and most explosive yet in recorded history to the people's overindulgence and their failure to repent.

The priest, according to one account, said that what happened was divine justice. It was God's just punishment for the sinners.

The Bicol word "*saua*" also means extreme satisfaction, or overindulgence in food and drink, for example. It is similar to the Tagalog "*sa'wa.*"

In 1684, another Franciscan priest, Pedro de Avila, then parish priest of Canaman town in Camarines Sur, complained of his flock's heavy drinking, especially during fiestas, that they failed to comply with their religious obligations. This perhaps explains the phenomenon of the *voyadores*, an exclusively male group, who, while heavily intoxicated with alcohol, carry the image of Bicol's patroness, Our Lady of Peñafrancia, on their backs in a procession in Naga City.

The *voyadores* are also derisively called by peeved devotees of the Virgin Mother and religious leaders as *buracheros* or drunkards.

Modern Cagsawa

Cagsawa, situated in Barangay Budiao, Daraga, is 514 kilometers south of Manila and is accessible by land transportation via the Maharlika Highway. Visitors from Manila can also fly to Legazpi City, and take a 10-minute ride to Cagsawa.

The main tourist attraction is still the breathtaking view of Mayon and its uniquely Bicolano hospitality and products. The three-hectare ground of the Cagsawa Church ruins has been transformed by the municipal government into a park and resort.

Cristina Agapita Pacres, municipal tourism officer and administrator of the Cagsawa Park and Resort, said a great deal of money for tourism has been invested in the place.

Cagsawa boasts of two swimming pools, cabanas, a duplex of cottages and a row of some 30 commercial stalls selling orchids, handicraft and souvenirs, Pacres said.

The local government earns some P2 million a year in entrance fees and rental of facilities, and more from municipal fees and taxes from a growing number of restaurants and other commercial establishments in areas adjacent to the park, she said.

But Joselito Arcilla, tourism assistant regional director and ardent mountaineer-conservationist, is dismayed at the rate the forest cover on the slopes of Mayon and other mountains in Bicol is disappearing.

The chirps of various bird species and the soothing sound of flowing rivers and steams are being overwhelmed by the high-pitched buzz of power chainsaws, Arcilla said.

He said plastic materials and the indiscriminate use of chemical pesticides were clogging and poisoning the natural waterways.

"Unless every one becomes truly conscious of conservation issues and start to care for the environment, the rivers, animals, mountains and everything else will soon be history," he said.

Tourism builds up amid ruins

By Carlos Santos Gegantoca
Contributor

GIVEN the chance, visitors who go to Albay should visit the Cagsawa Ruins at the foot of the majestic Mayon Volcano. Only recently, ambassadors and their wives from the European Union took their time out to see the ruins.

The Cagsawa Ruins is Bicol's counterpart of Italy's ruins of Pompeii and the Herculaneum, vestiges of Mt. Vesuvius' eruptions.

Statistics from the Provincial Tourism Office reveal that close to 100 local and foreign tourists flock to the Cagsawa Ruins daily. Entrance fee is P5 from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., and P10 from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m.

In 2000, the Cagsawa Ruins earned P1.6 million. The figure increased to P1.7 million in 2001 and almost P2 million in 2002.

Today, the tourist destination boasts of a park and resort. The park is administered by Christina S. Pacres, who has 26 contractual employees to attend to the needs of visitors.

Park facilities include a duplex cottage for occupancy at P500 for an overnight stay in an air-conditioned room and P450 for non-air-conditioned, a social hall that can accommodate 100 persons for P2,000, two swimming pools for children and adults and cabanas by the poolside, souvenir shops, *pili* nut sweets and orchids stalls, the Ayuntamiento Art Gallery that is open to the public daily, and a children's playground.

The park has been chosen by the Department of Tourism as one of the best tourists spots in Bicol.

About 1,500 tourists from San Pablo City observed their "Visita Iglesia" during the Lenten season in Cagsawa last year. In May last year, about 200 vice mayors from all over Luzon attended a luncheon at the resort.

Faith healers chose the place as venue for a convention that they held recently.

Daraga Mayor Gerry R. Jaucian actively supports all the activities in the park, using the earnings for its development and other worthwhile projects.

THE AUTHOR is a retired professor of the Bicol University in Legazpi City.

Friendship bonds as livelihood source for Puerto Galera women, children

By Madonna T. Virola
Puerto Galera, Oriental Mindoro

PUERTO Galera is famous for its pristine beaches, but amid such beauty, poverty exists. These children shoulder the responsibility of earning a living by knitting and selling friendship bonds. MADONNA VIROLA

YOU WON'T miss them along the beaches of Puerto Galera—the women and children selling friendship bonds or bracelets so they can have food on the table and, for some, a few centavos in school allowance.

In White Beach, the vendors hang around, waiting for boat passengers coming from the Batangas port to dock. But they are not allowed to go nearer their prospects for the latter's convenience.

"There are hundreds of us selling friendship bonds here," said Judith Bacay, 38. Other vendors said the figure could go up to a thousand if one included people who knit the bonds at home.

"There is at least one in a family who knows how to knit the friendship bond," said Judith.

Bacay said that years back, a foreigner taught local residents how to make the friendship bond. Those from Puerto Galera learned the craft easily because it made good money, especially when many visitors and bulk buyers arrived.

Like cross stitching, knitting bonds can be engrossing and enjoyable, but for vendors like Bacay, it means a source of livelihood.

Aside from bracelets (plain or rounded), the residents produce necklaces and anklets. An anklet can be created in 10 minutes, a flat bracelet takes two hours, and those with names, another half minute plus an extra P50 charge.

Beautiful and cheap

Bacay invests on strings, which sell at P21 per roll.

The longtime knitters have come up with color combinations and some variations in strokes. The products look very handy, nice and sweet, and cheap souvenir items.

The bonds are given to friends and loved ones, and even used as bag accessories. They also go well with other souvenirs or food products, which are sold by ambulant vendors and stores near the beaches.

Buyers who are usually on vacation would match the colors and designs with their skin.

Buying or even just taking time to look at the bonds would attract other vendors to come and also show their items and plead to customers to buy from them. Kind-hearted ones would buy one item from each of the vendors.

Bacay has been knitting and selling the bonds for seven years now. She has also been selling souvenir Puerto Galera T-shirts for 16 years.

"My shoulders are already sagging due to the heavy load I always carry," she said. She carries a total of 21 kilos in products around the beach.

Her grandmother, 78-year-old widow Francisca Sepillo, also sells friendship bonds, along with native food products.

Bacay said that from P10, the price of bracelet went down to P5 because of oversupply. In good times, the selling price would range from P20 to P100 for foreigners.

She said she was happy when some Koreans paid in dollars. "But there are also Americans who would squeeze the buying price," she related.

Children

Several children are also involved in the business. The youngest is around 7 years old. On weekends, Pelagia Abdon, 12, earns P100 to P300, which she turns over to her knitting mother. Her father is jobless.

Vice Mayor Ascan, a former teacher and councilor, said that on the issue of child labor, the municipal government had to consider the situation of the family.

"We want them (the children) to also earn something for their pocket money in school instead of begging from people, especially tourists," he said.

To recipients of the friendship bond, it may mean thoughtfulness of its giver as a souvenir from Puerto Galera. To the giver, it may mean sharing wonderful experiences in the beautiful and accessible tourist destination.

Abus 'to surprise' GIs when they come to Sulu

From page A1

dressed as "the Engineer" by Abu Sayyaf members. He is in fact an engineer by profession.

President Macapagal-Arroyo said Monday that she had approved joint training in Sulu, where a number of Abu Sayyaf bandits fled at the height of the Balikatan 02-1 on the nearby island of Basilan. But Malacañang said that the Abu Sayyaf was not the target of Balikatan 03-1.

The Armed Forces said that although US troops would monitor "company level capability of their Philippine counterpart, they will not be involved in actual combat operations."

But the Pentagon distanced itself from the announcement, saying that no decision had been made and that the new effort under discussion would go much further than just training.

Major escalation

A month of talks between the governments has centered on sending US special forces to Sulu as advisers and for possible joint operations—including combat—against the bandits, two Pentagon officials said.

That would be a major escalation of US involvement in the country, where American troops in recent months have only been doing training and joint exercises with Filipino armed forces.

Pentagon spokesperson Lt. Cmdr. Jeff Davis said the two governments were in "active discussions" about the terrorist threat in the Philippines "and how we can be of help." He declined to confirm there could be joint operations.

The proposal being discussed is to have American forces assisting, advising and operating with small groups of Filipino forces in the field. More meetings to work out details of a new operation are scheduled for next week.

Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes said that talks between US and Philippine officials would be held "in the next few days" to finalize the details of Balikatan 03-1.

Interviewed over the phone, Sulu Gov. Yusof Jikiri, who just arrived from pilgrimage in Mecca, said, "he was not consulted in the holding of the Balikatan exercise in Sulu." But Jikiri said he would talk to his local leaders about it. He expressed the hope that the exercise would bring development to the province.

Asked if the presence of US troops would be involved in operations against the Abu Sayyaf, Reyes said the Americans would be in Sulu merely to train and learn in the process. "In that process, it would be easier to fight the Abu Sayyaf there," he said.

Three soldiers killed

Even without the presence of American troops, clashes between the military and the bandits have erupted in Sulu.

Three soldiers and an Abu Sayyaf bandit were killed in an encounter in Patikul, Sulu, yesterday morning. Brig. Gen. Renato Miranda, commander of the Marines Forces South, said the soldiers had recovered the body of the slain bandit.

The Patikul clash came a day after government troops clashed with the group of Abu Sayyaf leader Mujiv Susukan in Barangay Bandang, Maimbung town.

Col. Alexander Aleo, commander of the Army's 104th Infantry Brigade, said four bandits and a soldier were slain in the encounter. Susukan was seriously wounded in the encounter, according to Aleo.

Miranda said the Marines were conducting an operation in Barangay Tanum when they saw a group allied with Radulan Sahiron at 6:30 a.m.

"The elements of the 10th Marine Battalion Landing Team had chanced upon the group led by the Jal brothers triggering an hour-long encounter. Four of our soldiers were also wounded," Miranda said.

In both clashes, the military had not sighted any of the hostages held by the Abu Sayyaf. The bandits are still holding four female Jehovah's Witnesses and three Indonesians.

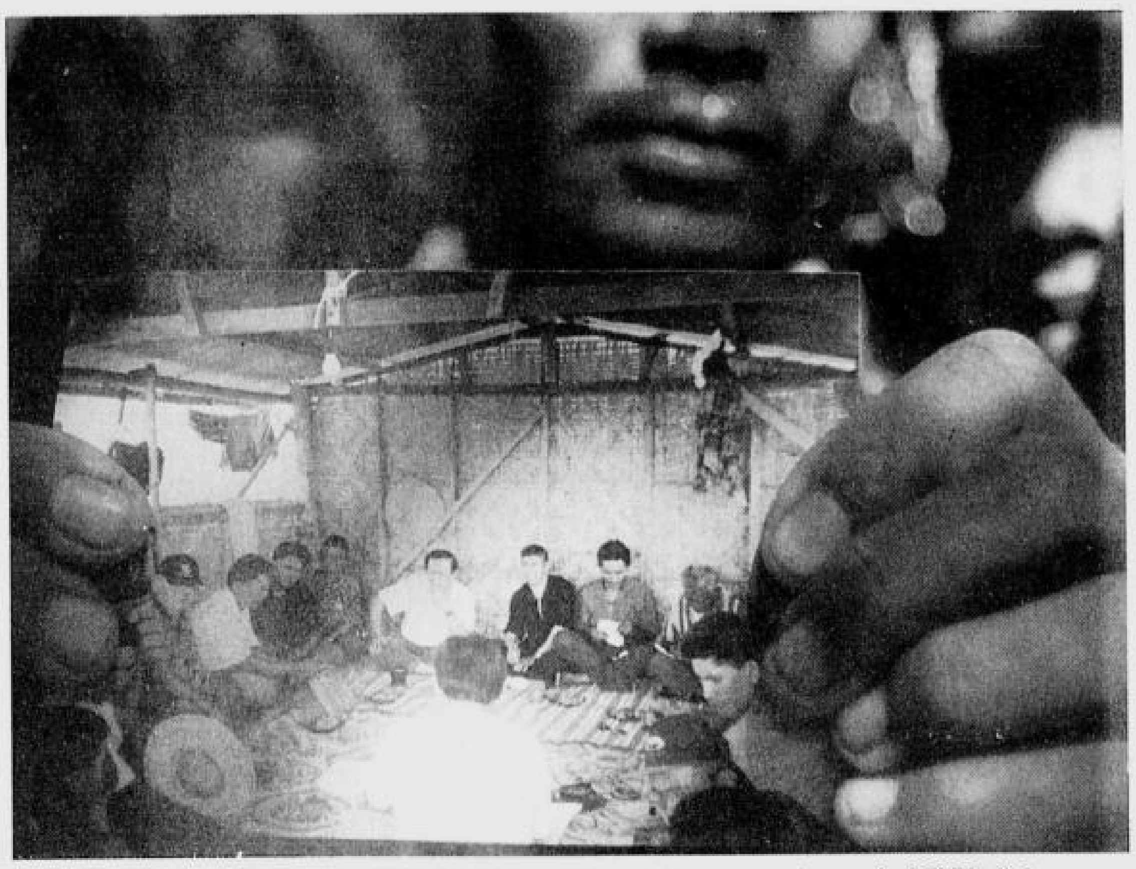
Last year, 1,200 US advisers and support personnel participated in the joint military exercise, the largest American military counterterror operation outside the war in Afghanistan.

The 160 advisers operated in Basilan, where bandits held American missionaries Martin and Gracia Burnham for more than a year. The program ended July 31 with most of the bandits killed, captured or dislodged from Basilan, officials said at the time. Mrs. Burnham was freed, but her husband was killed, during a Filipino operation against the bandits.

"During last year's operation on Basilan, the Armed Forces of the Philippines made significant progress," the Pentagon's Davis said. "The number of Abu Sayyaf terrorists was cut by hundreds, displaced persons returned home and humanitarian assistance . . . (drew) public support for the fight against the terrorists."

But the island of Jolo to the south has emerged as another trouble spot. The Philippine military early this month announced it had underestimated by nearly half the number of Abu Sayyaf bandits.

Last year, the military placed the Abu Sayyaf strength at 250, down from 800 in 2001. But AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Dionisio Santiago acknowledged on Feb. 5 that the number was closer to 500—most on the impoverished island of Jolo. *With reports from Martin P. Marfil in Manila; Julie S. Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau; and AP*



SALAMAT Hashim (in white polo shirt) is photographed with his commanders at the MILF Buliok complex, North Cotabato, by members of the Marine Battalion Landing Team. VAL HANDUMON

Clashes force 78,000 to flee homes

From page A1

town following Tuesday's MILF ambush in Matanog that left seven soldiers killed and 11 others wounded.

Military authorities yesterday said soldiers pursued the MILF attackers and killed at least 10 of them. Maj. Julieto Ando, spokesperson of the Army's 6th Infantry Division, said the bodies of the rebels were found in Barangay Pimbatao, also in Matanog.

Dr. Lampa Pandi, acting ARMM health secretary, said medical workers had been deployed in areas where the refugees were temporarily housed.

Not enough funds

"Unfortunately, we have no funds for emergency situations like this. We are still operating under last year's budget," Pandi told reporters. "We are responding according to our present resources."

Social Welfare Secretary Corazon "Dinky" Soliman has released P300,000 in emergency assistance and augmentation funds for the displaced families, according to Pombain Karon-Kadil, DSWD-ARMM assistant secretary.

"While the number of refugees in Maguindanao is bigger than that in North Cotabato, the assistance we could provide them is not enough," Karon-Kadil said.

She said her office could not rely on national agencies for more assistance because "we are always told that the ARMM is already autonomous, meaning the DSWD national [office] could not release calamity funds for ARMM constituents."

ARMM Gov. Parouk Hussin has ordered his Cabinet officials to set aside part of their operating funds to buy rice and other provisions for the affected families.

"The ARMM is bleeding so we are counting on generous individuals and organizations to help us address the needs of our displaced families," Karon-Kadil said.

To date, the social welfare agency has distributed some 500 bags of rice, boxes of noodles and sardines, which, according to relief officials, were enough to feed some 78,000 evacuees for only about five days.

Matanog ambush

Army spokesperson Major Ando said the bodies of the 10 rebels killed by soldiers after the Matanog ambush were brought to the military's morgue in Awang, Datu Odin Sinsuat town and would be released to their relatives.

"These rebels could have been seriously wounded in the encounter. We believe they were abandoned by their comrades who are escaping from the pursuing troops," Ando said. "We have already identified the slain rebels and one of them was a commander."

MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu confirmed the military's recovery of the 10 bodies near Barira town. "But only one MILF fighter was among them," he said, and their death had nothing to do with the ambush.

Kabalu said the MILF attackers were on their way home and were passing through Barira when one of them, identified as a certain Tawa, was spotted by members of a family with which he had a grudge.

"They fired at Tawa. The other fighters joined in the firefight. Tawa died and also nine of his enemies," Kabalu said. Two other rebels were wounded.

But Ando said Kabalu's claim of a grudge fight was highly improbable. "How can that be when there are no feuding families in the area?" he asked.

Buildup of forces

The government and the MILF are building up forces around the rebels' former lair, Camp Abubakar, forcing villagers to flee. The affected towns are Pagalungan, Pagagawan, Datu Paglas, SK Pendatun, Datu Paglat, Sultan sa Barongis, Shariff Aguak, Ampatuan, Datu Piang, Mamasapano, South Upi, Buldon, Barira and Matanog.

"We have been in this situation before, this is not new to us," said Baikong Alaman, of Barangay Sapad, Matanog.

Alaman's family is one of the more than 2,000 families who are occupying a dilapidated public school building in Parang. The mother of five said her husband Kasan decided to stay in their farm to watch over their rice field.

"He will follow us should war erupt anew," she said. During the 2000 war, she said, she lost her valuables as the family hurriedly left amid heavy bombardment by war planes and howitzers.

"That is why we have to leave even before the fighting starts," she said.

Samad Tutia, also of Matanog, said he saw several trucks of soldiers entering the former MILF camp that is now being converted into a development zone by the Macapagal administration. The Army's 602nd Infantry Brigade has set up headquarters in the area, now named Camp Duma Sinsuat.

"I also saw several hundreds of MILF fighters gearing for war around Abubakar ... I believe war is unavoidable," Tutia said in the vernacular.

Peace talks

Peace advocates belonging to the Mindanao People's Caucus (MPC) said no amount of coordination among the DSWD, local government units and the private sector in relief distribution could respond adequately to the needs of the evacuees. They called on the government and the MILF peace panels to resume negotiations.

"The confrontation is easily exploited by elements or groups who want to ignite a shooting war across Mindanao," an MPC statement said.

The group also called on the MILF to report, apprehend and turn over any criminals reportedly taking refuge in its areas to facilitate the gradual pullout of government troops.

"We believe that a lasting peace agreement between the government and the MILF must be arrived at through the negotiation process, and not through the 'carrot-and-stick' approach," it added.

Ms Macapagal yesterday said she has approved the final peace agreement that the government would offer the MILF.

The move was seen as a signal for the resumption of formal peace talks. Malaysia has reportedly agreed to provide the venue for the talks. *With reports from Charlie C. Señase and Jeffrey M. Tupas, PDI Mindanao Bureau, and Dona Pazzibugan in Manila*

Edsa I on Feb. 25 is non-working holiday

From page A1

dictatorship.

"The Edsa People Power Revolution restored our democratic institutions and ushered in meaningful political, social and economic reforms," the' proclamation read.

President Macapagal-Arroyo will fly to Kuala Lumpur on Feb. 24 to attend the Non-Aligned Movement summit but she will be back in Manila on Feb. 25 in time for the commemorative activities.

She will attend a Mass at the Edsa Shrine in Mandaluyong after which she and former President Corazon Aquino will proceed to Fort Magsaysay in Nueva Ecija. They will visit the detention cells of the late Sen. Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino and fellow anti-Marcos activist Jose "Pepe" Diokno.

Ms Macapagal yesterday said she would declare their cells as national shrines.

"It's an important place to commemorate an important part of our history," she said. *Dona Pazzibugan*

Kids carry invisible wounds of war

From page A1

In her report, Lopez said villagers who fled last week's fighting between government forces and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front guerrillas had to crowd into makeshift shelters and evacuation centers.

Social welfare officials say more than 141,000 people fled their homes in the four adjacent provinces affected by the fighting—North Cotabato, Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur and Sultan Kudarat.

Lopez's group is involved in a psycho-social rehabilitation project supported by the Danish government, University of the Philippines medical professionals, a Philippine aid group run by businessmen and the British relief agency Oxfam. It has documented the effects of psychological trauma among villagers during major government offensives in the Pikit area in 1997, 2000, 2001 and last week.

She said "displacement and disruption" had severely affected the mental health of people caught in the crossfire, particularly children.

She cited the case of an 11-year-old boy who jumped into the water, terrified after a bomb dropped by a military plane exploded near his boat in May 2000. Traumatized, he has since shied away from playing, eaten clay and sand and developed a speech impediment.

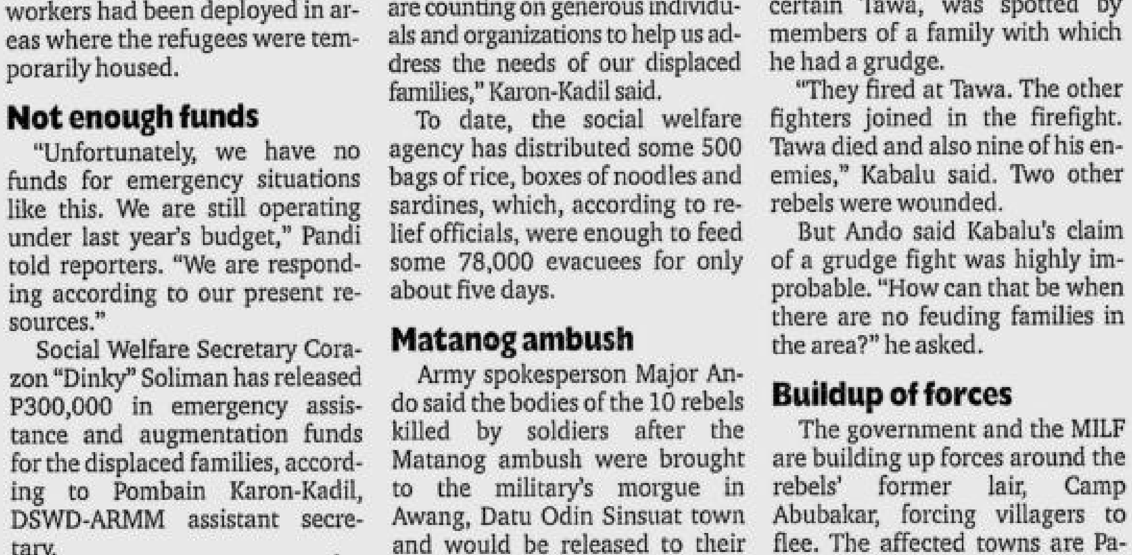
In another case, Lopez said a Christian pupil was asked whether he would treat a wounded Muslim if he became a doctor. The pupil replied, "Never. I would even kill him!" A Muslim pupil was asked a similar question, and replied, facing his classmate, "Never. I will also kill you!"

The government has lamented the civilian suffering, but says military operations are necessary to restore order.

"I am saddened by the displacement of peaceful families from their area, but sometimes this is the price we have to pay for long-term peace and order," President Macapagal-Arroyo said Wednesday.

Social Welfare Secretary Corazon Soliman said social workers and counselors are conducting play therapy for children in evacuation centers.

"The main goal is to ensure that the trauma of the armed conflict, which essentially stole their childhood, is explained and that they can regain their childhood," Soliman said. *AP*



PLAY therapy sessions are conducted for the children from Sitio Latip, Barangay Gi-gli, Pikit, North Cotabato, by Balik Kalipay youth volunteers Rahma Gilman and Sulaipa Unggui.

common (kɒm′ən) adj.: Usual; ordinary, without special characteristics; average; standard

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Chessers leave for Qatar

ASIA'S first grandmaster Eugene Torre will lead the Philippine team which will leave the country today for Doha, Qatar to compete in the 4th Asian men's individual chess championships slated Feb. 22 to March 2. Joining him are fellow GMs Joey Antonio and Bong Villamayor and GM candidate Mark Callano Paragua. The even serves as qualifying for the Fide men's championship.

FIRST GENT'S CIRCUIT

Father's tip gives Cruz one-stroke lead

By Jong Arcano

CRUZ: Staging a big comeback.
ROGER MARGALLO

FATHER knows best.

After seeking his father's advice when his swing didn't give him the results he wanted, Dan Cruz seems to have made the right decision as he sizzled with a six-under-par 66 yesterday at the Manila Southwoods leg of the First Gentleman's Professional Golf Circuit.

That second-round effort was Cruz's best score of the season.

Cruz was just trying to minimize mistakes, but he opened up with birdies on the first two holes and had some of it coming home for a 137, seven under par.

The Wack Wack pro needed a three-foot birdie on the last hole to step a stroke ahead of Richard Sinfuego, the circuit's Order of Merit leader who was already three under after nine holes but slowed down in the back nine to settle for a 69=138.

Next at 139 was first-round leader Elmer Salvador, who lost his leadership bid to two three-putt bogeys although his 72 for the day kept him very much in the hunt for the title as he stood just two behind with a 139 total in this 12th leg of the revived circuit funded by First Gentleman Mike Arroyo and San Miguel Beer.

Then came Cassius Casas, whose bid for a third title on tour got derailed by Sinfuego at the Orchard last week, at 141.

He struggled with a 73, favoring his sore right shoulder on each swing and even doing his follow through with the left arm.

But the fighter that he is, Casas still managed to spike his round with an eagle on the sixth, sinking a 20-foot putt from the fringe.

Casas said that if the pain stays after a scheduled session with a therapist yesterday, he will withdraw.

"I don't want to risk it. I was already thinking about quitting this morning but I tried to give it a try on a hole-per-hole basis," he said.

Cruz, who did not join the Mindanao swing, attributed his newfound confidence to minor corrections on his swing aided by his father Susing who is a teaching pro.

"I decided not to play in Mindanao to rest and practice with my father here in Manila instead. I've not asked him to do that for quite a while," said Cruz. "I think he did a good job."

Cruz has been winless for almost eight years now and the Wack Wack teaching pro feels it's about time he wins one again. It was also the third time he led in a round this season but faded in the crucial rounds.

The second round scores:
137 - D. Cruz 71-66
138 - R. Sinfuego 69-69
139 - E. Salvador 67-72
141 - C. Casas 68-73
143 - T. Lascuna 73-70, W. Horiguchi 70-73, R. Pactolerin 71-72
144 - E. Estrera 71-73, B. Magada 72-72, R. Antonio 71-73, R. Pagunsan 74-70
145 - A. Balan 76-69, R. Borreta 70-75, M. Pucay 73-73
146 - C. LaO 74-72, M. Manubay 72-74, C. Villaroman 76-70, R. Sasutil 74-72, R. Cabajar 71-75, R. Cuello 76-69

Miñoza confirms stint in Pocholo Razon tilt

FRANKIE Miñoza gets another chance to showcase his shotmaking skills on home grounds when he competes in first Don Pocholo Razon Memorial Invitational golf tournament next week at The Country Club in Canlubang.

The 42-year-old Miñoza has confirmed his participation in the four-day championship slated Feb. 25-28 offering P1 million to the winner.

Organizing chair Vince Villafuerte said a free practice round will be held on Monday starting at 8 a.m.

Miñoza appeared rusty some weeks back after he finished joint 15th in the Davao leg of the First Gentleman's Circuit, breaking par only once in three days. Then he withdrew after 27 holes in the next leg in Cagayan due to a recurring wrist injury he absorbed in the Japan Tour.

But the Japan PGA Tour regular is expected to be in tip-top condition next week, easily making him the man to watch in the event put up by Ricky Razon, Jr., president of the International Container Services, Inc. to honor the memory of his father, Don Pocholo, who founded ICTSI in 1987 and turned it into the biggest ports management company in the country.

But the reticent Miñoza will have his hands full against a talented field of players toughened up by a series of tournaments in the ongoing First Gentleman's Circuit and raring to spoil the bid of the top Filipino shotmaker for the third straight time.

Canadian Rick Gibson, who won last year's Philippine Open at Wack Wack, has begged off from the event due to a previous commitment to play in the Myanmar Open at the Davidoff Tour.

But the field remains as talent-laden as ever with the top 25 players after the Mindanao leg of the current tour seeing action. That includes the likes of Cassius Casas, Rodolfo Cuello, Mars Pucay, Robert Pactolerin, Benjie Magada, Rey Pagunsan and Richard Sinfuego.

GOLFWATCH

Bishop Lim meet

THE 1ST Bishop Rafael Lim Foundation Golf Tournament will be held tomorrow at the Wack Wack Golf and Country Club, Robert Aventajado, the foundation's chair and president, announced yesterday. Aventajado, also the chair of the Philippine Olympic Committee, POC president Cito Dayrit, Philippine Sports Commission chair Eric Buhain, and Luis Tan, vice president of WWGCC, will hit the ceremonial ball.

Liberica Invt'l

THE LIBERICA Golf Invitational, Mount Malarayat Golf and Club's major member-guest championship, will be played March 22-23 in Lipa City. The tournament is the brainchild of Mount Malarayat chair Tony Turalba.

It will be limited to 108 teams with an entry fee of P5,000. For details, call (043) 756-7006 or 89307024 loc. 220/251 or fax inquiries to (043) 756-7005 and 894-0155.

Upsilonians play

THE SECOND leg of the Upsilonians na Pumapalo annual series will be played tomorrow at the Valley Golf and Country Club with businessman Alberto Salanga as tournament host. Series chair Col. Abe Villanueva said 80 players, all members of the Upsilon Sigma Phi Alumni Association, are playing. At stake are trophies for the overall champion and Classes A, B, C and D winners.

Bumgarner, Guidicelli top Indonesian karting

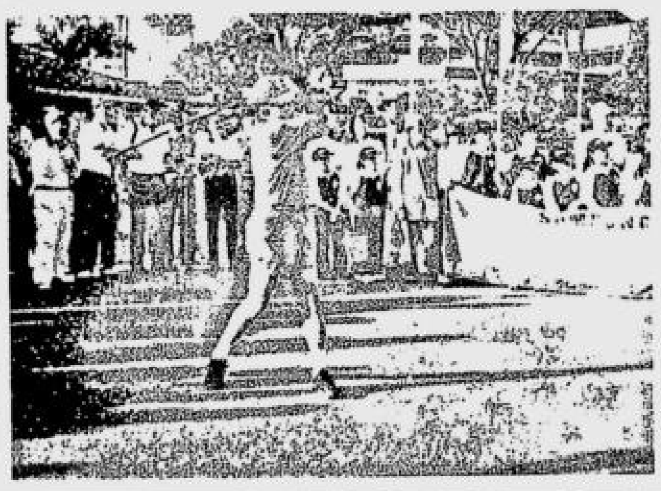
THIRTEEN-YEAR-OLD Michele Bumgarner and 12-year old Matteo Guidicelli made the country proud after they finished 1-2 in the recently concluded 2002-2003 CIK-FIA Asia Zone Open karting championships at the Sentul International Racetrack in Indonesia.

The four-nation, three part series kicked off in Carmona, Cavite, last August and proceeded to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia last December.

Bumgarner entered the final leg in Indonesia as a heavy favorite in the Junior ICA category, leading the series by eight points.

Despite facing logistical problems with her equipment arriving a day late, and having to overcome an unpredictable weather, the high school student from Brent International School courageously hung on to her lead en route to victory.

Guidicelli displayed expert driving skills that allowed him to take outright second place behind Bumgarner for a 1-2 Filipino finish in the series.



CEREMONIAL TEE-OFF
Former President Fidel V. Ramos hits the ceremonial ball in yesterday's opening of the Samsung Interscholastics golf championship at the Villamor Golf Club. Among those in the crowd are Korean ambassador Son Sang Ho, PAF commanding general Lt. Gen. Nestor Santillan, Mandaluyong Mayor Benhur Abalos, Samsung president Sang Youl Eom, Federation president Richie Garcia, Jungolf president Gerry Handog, school officials and participants.
ROGER MARGALLO

Rotary fishing slated

THE ANNUAL Rotary Fishing competition is being looked forward to like a fiesta among Rotarians, their family and friends.

The event started in 1995 as a "Take a Kid Fishing" program of the Rotary Club of Paranaque North chaired by CP Romy J. Herman.

The amount of goodwill poured in by the officers and members of RCPN as well as the popularity it has earned prompted the Rotary membership to make it an Annual District affair.

It is in this light that the Rotary District 3830 will stage the event on Sunday, Feb. 23, from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. at LWT 888 Restaurant at Covelandia Road, Kawit, Cavite.

This year's event promises high attendance and a bountiful catch according to Danilo "Danny" Yao, president of RCPN, the host club.

At stake are trophies and lucratice, said sports directors Ver Hizon and Pau Sotto.

Some of the major sponsors are Standard Insurance, Noel Laman of CLTP Law Office, Philusa Corp. EACH Caltex-Sta. Rosa, IPP Darly de Roca, PE Bing Lee, PN Ver Hizon, AADY, Orix Metro Leasing, Giant Merchantile, Nature Herbs, Zest-O, Andersons, Colgate Palmolive, Janine Printers and Abiva Publishing.

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Campo, Loyzaga lead Beda honorees today

CAMPOMANES

LOYZAGA

BASKETBALL immortal Carlos Loyzaga and lifetime honorary World Chess Federation president Florencio Campomanes lead the initial batch of San Beda Hall of Fame members who will be honored today at the Red and White Ball at the NBC tent in Makati City.

The other awardees are Charles Borck, main man of the Philippine cage team that finished fifth in the 1936 Berlin Olympics; Enrique Beech, one of the best shooters of his time; former national basketball coach Arturo Rius; Ildefonso Tronqued, a soccer great who successfully pushed for the inclusion of the sport in national school competitions and archer Ramon Aldea.

The jurors were former Philippine Basketball Association commissioner Emilio Bernardino Jr., chair and Rev. Anscar Chupangco, San Beda College rector, Rep. Jose Carlos Lacson of Negros Occidental, and human rights lawyer Rene Saguisag, members.

Loyzaga catapulted Philippine basketball to world fame by leading the national team to third place in the 1954 World basketball Championship in Brazil and seventh place in the 1956 Olympics in Melbourne.

From 1951 until 1963 when he retired, Loyzaga extended the Philippines' pre-war reign in Asian basketball. In 1967, Loyzaga coached the national team which regained the ABC (Asian Basketball Confederation) championship in Seoul, Korea.

Campomanes, who finished his elementary and high school in San Beda, placed Asia in the world chess map during his term as Fide president from 1982 to 1995. With the zeal of an evangelist, Campomanes broke the boundaries of race and religion to widen the reach of chess.

Before turning over the Fide presidency to Kirsan Ilyumzhinov in 1995, chess had 160 member countries, which made it the third largest world sports organization.

He is credited for universalizing Fide and sparked chess explosion in the Third World leading to the emergence of men and women world champions from Asia.

Campomanes had won many awards, including Grand Knight of Fide, the chess body's highest plum, and the Martires de Barbados from the Cuban government, but he still participates in the decision-making processes of the Fide Presidential Board.

Borck, nicknamed the Blonde Bombshell for his looks and at 6-foot-1 the tallest player of his time, was named Bedan of the Century in 2001 also for leading the Philippine basketball team in international competitions.

Beech excelled with silver medal in the Asian Games. He remains active in his sport and in soccer. He also has a mean swing in golf.

Rius, one of San Beda's revered alumni, became nationally famous by sinking the winning basket in a pre-war NCAA title match with three seconds left. He was also known as the Prussian Drillmaster for being a disciplinarian. He coached the Philippine team to victory in the inaugural ABC tournament in Manila in 1960 and handled the Olympic team to Rome the same year.

Tronqued was an accomplished center forward in football who also excelled in sprint, high jump, long jump events in athletics. His athletics prowess enabled him to compete in four Far Eastern Games from Shanghai to Osaka. Upon his retirement, he became one of Asia's best football referees.

Archery champion Aldea saw action in the Munich Olympics in 1972 and was included in the Scroll of Honor for Archery in 1988, an award given by the Philippine Olympic Committee.

SPORTS TV

Compiled by Lorenzo Manguiat

BASKETBALL: NBA - Rockets vs Suns (Game 7, 1995 W. Conf. Finals), 8:30 a.m. (r - 5 p.m.), 76ers vs Bulls, 10:30 a.m. (r - 10 p.m.), Solar Sports, Wizards vs Hornets, 7 p.m., IBC 13

GOLF: Buick Invitational, 2 p.m. and 10:30 p.m. (r), Star Sports

The Golf Club 2003, 9 p.m., Star Sports

TENNIS: The Collins Cup, 9 a.m. (r), Star Sports

Siebel Open, 6 p.m. (r), Star Sports

POOL: 2002 WPBA Classic Tour, 12:30 p.m. (r), ESPN

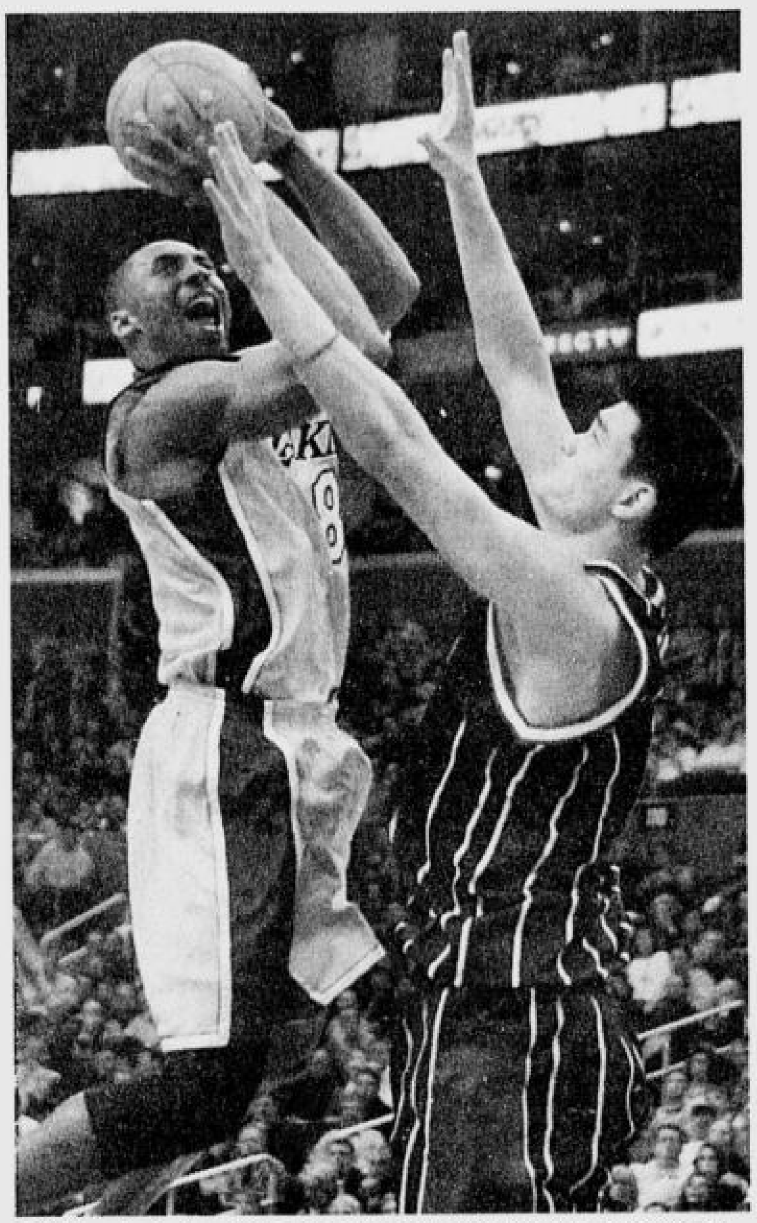
Rack 'Em Up 2, 1 p.m. and 9:30 p.m. (r), Star Sports

World Pool Trick Shot Masters 2001, 6 p.m. (r), ESPN

SOCCER: Spanish Football League, 11 a.m. (r), Star Sports

DOUBLE OVERTIME

Kobe powers Lakers past Rockets



LOS Angeles Lakers Kobe Bryant jumps over Houston Rockets' Yao Ming during the first overtime at the Staples Center in Los Angeles yesterday. Lakers won, 106-99, with Bryant scoring 52 points. AFP

LOS ANGELES--Kobe Bryant scored a season-high 52 points as the Los Angeles Lakers moved into a tie for the final playoff spot in the Western Conference with a 106-99 double overtime win over the Houston Rockets on Tuesday.

Bryant went 19-for-37 from the field and was a perfect 11-for-11 from the line.

He scored 17 of his points in the two overtime periods while adding eight rebounds and seven assists in 54 minutes.

"It was a big game for us, everybody came out hard and played well," Bryant said.

But it was Bryant who played more than well, turning in a dominating performance as the Lakers were without Shaquille O'Neal, sidelined with a knee injury for the second straight game.

Bryant appeared to hurt his knee in the game and was limping at times, but he fought off the injury and said after the game he expects to play against Utah on Wednesday.

Bryant set a franchise record by scoring 40 points or more in six straight games. He has now scored at least 35 points in 10 straight games.

Los Angeles (27-25) snapped a two-game losing streak and tied Houston for eight in the West.

The Lakers have won eight of 10 while the Rockets have dropped 10 of 14.

Rick Fox added 15 points for the Lakers, while Derek Fisher had 13. Robert Horry added eight points nad had 11 rebounds.

Yao Ming had 24 points and hauled down 14 rebounds for the Rockets before fouling out late in the first overtime period. Steve Francis added 17 points while Cuttino Mobley and Maurice Taylor both added 16.

In Sacramento, Vlade Divac scored 21 points and had 19 rebounds to pace the Kings to a 102-93 win over the Milwaukee Bucks.

Peja Stojakovic added 26 points for Sacramento, while Mike Bibby had 21 as the Kings won for the third time in four games.

Toni Kukoc scored 21 points and had eight rebounds to lead the Bucks.

Antawn Jamieson scored 39 points and added 13 rebounds for the Warriros, while Gary Arenas added 22 points and 12 assists.

In Orlando, Tracy McGrady and Mike Miller both scored 24 points as the Magic rallied past the New Orleans Hornets 99-94.

Orlando trailed by 12 points with five minutes to play, but a late run helped the Magic end a three-game losing streak.

Darrell Armstrong added 15 points for Orlando and Andrew DeClercq had a season-high 14.

Jamal Mashburn scored 20 points for the Hornets while David Wesley added 17 points, eight rebounds and six assists. P.J.

Brown had 14 points and 12 rebounds.

In Memphis, Pau Gasol scored 24 points and had 14 rebounds and seven assists to lead the Grizzlies to a 108-103 upset overtime win over the Indiana Pacers.

Jason Williams added 18 points and nine assists for the Grizzlies, who have won three of four games.

Shane Battier added 15 points and Lorenzen Wright chipped in with 14.

Jermaine O'Neal and Ron Artest both had 23 points to lead Indiana.

O'Neal also grabbed 15 rebounds while Reggie Miller had 22 points and. Brad Miller had 16 points and 14 rebounds.

In San Antonio, Bruce Bowen scored 18 points to pace the Spurs to a 101-76 romp over the Denver Nuggets, the Spurs first home game in 23 days.

San Antonio has won nine games in a row, including eight straight at the tail-end of a nine-game road trip to set an NBA record.

Stephen Jackson added 14 points for the winners, while Tim Duncan added 11 points and 12 rebounds.

Denver, losers of six straight games, got 21 points from Juwan Howard.

Complete results

Chicago 107, Cleveland 101; Orlando 99, New Orleans 94; New Jersey 84, Miami 79; Memphis 108, Indiana 103 (OT); Dallas 105, Atlanta 79; San Antonio 101, Denver 76; Sacramento 102, Milwaukee 93; Boston 125, Golden State 117; LA Lakers 106, Houston 99 (2OT).

NBN wants 'Beam' deal profit share

By June Navarro

THE PHILIPPINE Basketball Association's problems with a local-brand toothpaste transfixed on the floor of the Araneta Coliseum are far from over.

This surfaced after NBN-4, which secured the exclusive television coverage of the PBA, asked for a portion of the profit that will be generated from the league's advertising deal with Beam toothpaste.

"We understand that the decals are indeed PBA property. But if the decals fall within the range of the cameras and are commercial in nature, we believe that it infringes our right as official coveror of the league," said NBN general manager Joey Isabelo.

To address the situation, NBN management has forwarded a letter to PBA commissioner Noli Eala expressing grave concern over NBN's potential loss of income should the Beam toothpaste decals be shown on television without compensation.

The letter was signed by Bobby Arias, head of the task force formed by the PBA and NBN. Eala was in a closed-door meeting when contacted by the Inquirer for comment.

"It could create a lockout. Meaning, other toothpaste brands will have their reservations on entering an advertising deal with NBN or, at worst, other television sponsors will clamor about Beam getting a free advertisement," Isabelo told the Inquirer.

The PBA had earlier struck an agreement with Beam, agreeing to a P5-million settlement the toothpaste brand had offered. The deal came after the PBA threatened to abandon the Araneta Coliseum for allowing Beam toothpaste to garnish the arena's flooring without notifying the league.

"The last thing we want is another problem. But if we allow this to pass, it will definitely set a precedent," said Isabelo.

Beam toothpaste is set to take over the advertisement spot of Shell Pilipinas on the Cubao arena flooring after the petroleum company decided not to renew its contract with Uniprom Inc, the entertainment arm of the Araneta Group of Companies.

Shell's contract will expire tomorrow, two days before the PBA opens its 29th season on Feb. 23. A PBA insider said the league allowed Shell to put its logo on the Araneta floor without compensation after the Shell officials in the PBA lobbied for its approval.

Jaguar golf tourney unfolds March 17-21

JAGUAR Philippines hosts the 4th Jaguar Golf Invitational on March 17-21 at the Country Club in Canlubang. Laguna.

Around 200 Jaguar owners and guests are expected to participate in this year's golfing event, one of the longest-played in the country.

Guided by the international Best-ball Stableford tournament rules, the event will consist of four qualifying rounds from which the top three scores per day will qualify into the championship round.

The two-player team who will be declared champions will be flown to the UK by Cathay Pacific Airways, official airline of the 4th Jaguar Invitational, to the annual Jaguar World Golf Final in Scotland scheduled on May 11-16.

The 4th Jaguar Invitational boasts of an array of who's who in the business community who are either Jaguar owners or invited guests and who all share two things in common: passion for a Jaguar and a love for golf. In what is fast becoming to be the most exclusive invitational and the longest-played golf event, the tournament's list of patrons and sponsors has been steadily growing.

This year's participating sponsors aside from Cathay Pacific Airways, are Standard Chartered Bank, Petron Corporation, DHL Worldwide Express, Pentstar (representative of Lacoste golf shoes), Pacific Internet, Roche, Lucerne Jewellers, GlobeTelecom, Galvez Galvez and Associates. Major prizes to be raffled off during the awarding ceremonies were donated by, EXXONMOBIL, The Westin Philippine Plaza, Miniloc Resort, The Makati Shang-rila, Sony-Ericsson, and Hotel Intercontinental Manila (Official Hotel of the 4th Jaguar Golf Invitational).

Pool A battles Sta. Lucia five

GAMES TODAY *(Lyceum Gym)*

3:30 p.m.--Shell-UCAA vs Red Bull National Pool B 5:00 p.m.--Talk N Text National Pool A vs Sta. Lucia-CUSA

TALK N TEXT-National Pool A hopes to sustain its winning run when it tangles with Sta. Lucia-CUSA at 5 p.m. today in the opener of their Bert Lina Six-Feet and Above Junior Cup showdown at the Lyceum Gym.

Mentored by Johnny Tam, Pool A is on a six-game roll and has beaten its opponents by an average margin of 28 points to loom as favorite in the best-of-three series.

Fact is, Pool A defeated the CUSA selection of coach Gene Tumapat, 88-78, during the eliminations on Friday.

For Tam, however, there's no room for complacency.

"It's the finals. You can throw away everything down the drain now. Our record is not an assurance of victory. This is not the time to be overconfident," said Tam, who draws power from four members of the 2001 Philippine Youth team. *Roy Luarca*

Ucap derby on tonight

MANDALUYONG Coliseum's "5th UCAP Firebird Anito 7-Cock derby" gets going tonight with some 50 exciting fights lined up. Sponsors are Sagupaan Hammer Dewormer, Sagupaan Mite free Shampoo, Complexor 3000 and Washout Shampoo from Lakpue Drug Inc.

Currently leading the pack are UCAP president Raymond Velayo and Buth Halili (arnis master I), Nelson Co and Alex Tang of Bicol (Guts and Glory) and Sonny Lagon/Mayor Joel Brillantes (JT JBB Blue Blade) who tallied three points each Tuesday night.

Meanwhile, the month-long screening of cockerels will be conducted by the Ucap screening committee from March 1-31 only, in connection with the coming stag derbies in September and October at the Mandaluyong Coliseum, said screening committee chair Biboy Enriquez.

All interested partied may contact Ms. Vicky D. Bugayong at tel. nos. 928-7582, 924-5051 or 09176148354 or 09195185899.

RP Team roster known after series vs Americans

By Roy Luarca

THE US selection versus Philippine National team games from Feb. 22-March 1 have been billed a goodwill exhibition series, but for the 26 remaining Filipino aspirants it will all be serious play.

Reason: The national coaching staff headed by Aric del Rosario will used the series as a basis for choosing the final members of the Philippine team that will be defending their Southeast Asian Basketball Association and Southeast Asian Games crowns in Manila and Vietnam, respectively, this year.

In addition, the RP Team will see action in the Asian Basketball Confederation Men's Championship and possibly an international tournament in Italy.

Basketball Association of the Philippines vice president Christian Tan said the national pool will be divided into two teams against the Americans, after which Del Rosario will bare the roster of the RP Team being backed by Cebuana Lhuillier owned by John Henry Lhuillier.

Tan thanked the PBL for arranging the goodwill series against the Americans, saying that it would be of great help to the Filipinos' preparations for international competitions.

Among the RP Team aspirants are UE hotshot James Yap, St. Francis of Assisi stalwarts Ranidel de Ocampo, Irvin Sotto and Al Vergara, Ateneo's Rich Alvarez and Davao discovery Peter June Simon.

Tyson ready to fight again

TYSON sports a new tattoo on his face. AP

LAS VEGAS--Just when it seemed Mike Tyson's world couldn't get more bizarre, he outdid himself.

Faced with an uncertain future and the reality of throwing away a reported $5 million-plus payday, Tyson woke up in a better mood Tuesday and pronounced himself ready to fight after all.

A day before, Tyson backed out of Saturday's bout against Clifford Etienne. Now, though, Etienne says he doesn't want to fight, leaving the former heavyweight champion in need of another opponent.

Tyson boarded a chartered jet Tuesday to Memphis, Tennessee, according to promoter Gary Shaw, and is ready to face whoever is in the ring against him Saturday.

"Mike told me he wants to fight, and we're here to fight," trainer Freddie Roach said after the plane landed.

Earlier in the day, Roach said he told Tyson that he didn't think he was ready for the fight but would stand behind him. After landing, Roach sounded more confident despite Tyson missing time in the ring. AP

USJ-R, Adamson favored in beach volleyball

BRAND manager Tina Samaco (3rd from left) reacts to a question during the launching of the Nestea beach volleyball championship yesterday at the Rockwell Club. (From left) Babes Castillo, Johann Tanpho, Eugene David and Ed Tamayo of Publicis Ama. AUGUST DE LA CRUZ

By Dennis U. Eroa

UNIVERSITY of San Jose Recoletos and Adamson University will defend their men and women's titles, respectively, as the 7th Nestea Beach Volleyball University championship starts with the regional eliminations on Friday at the Powerplant Mall, Rockwell Center in Makati City.

Ninety-six teams from Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao will see action in the country's biggest beach volleyball tournament which culminates with the Boracay national finals on April 5-6.

Veterans Jerome Capada and Norvie Labuga will try to give Recoletos its second straight crown. Kristine Ann Dave will have a new partner in Mercedita Matira as the Lady Falcons seek to retain the title they won over Dumaguete's Foundation University.

Tina Samaco, Nestea brand manager of Nestle Philippines, yesterday said in a press conference that final preparations are being completed for the Nestea tournament with Rapp Collins as event organizer, NEXT as officiating group and Publicis-AMA as marketing communications agency.

Over half a million prizes are in store for the winning teams, with the top plum pegged at P100,000 each for the men's and women's champions and P50,000 in sports equipment for their respective schools.

Participating teams will be flown to Metro Manila for the elimination and semi-final legs. The Luzon and Metro Manila elims will be held from February 28 to March 3; the Visayas elims from March 13-14; and the Mindanao elims on March 15. The semis will be held on March 16, with the 24 top teams competing for eight slots in the finals.

RACING TIPS

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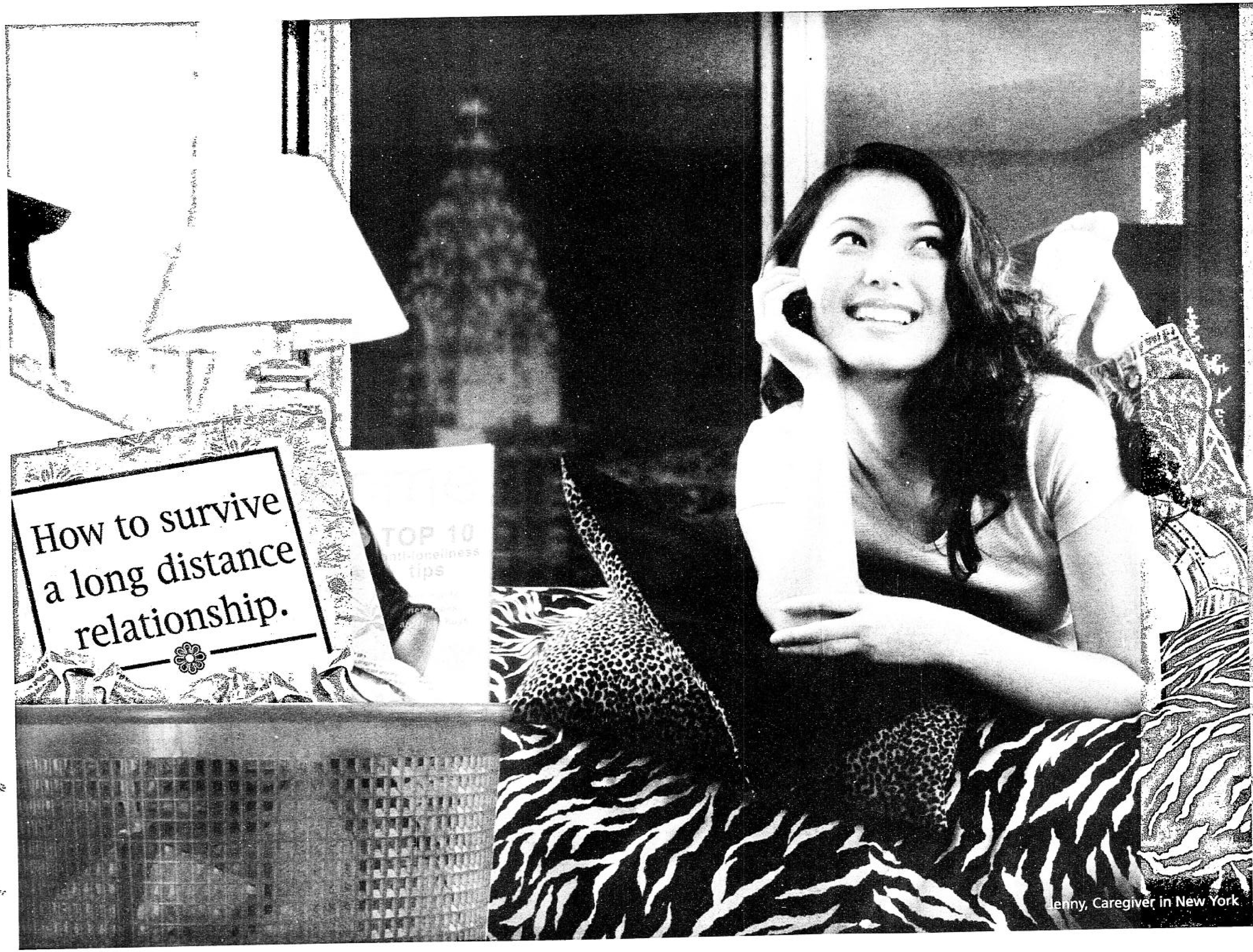
Race 2--1. Golden Tale 2. Carlo's Charm
Race 3--1. Divine Diva 2. Fearzam 3. Baccarat 4. Miggy 5. Houdini
Race 4--1. Dreams of Flame 2. Aprey Special 3. Fantasia 4. Enjoy D View
Race 5--1. Scent of the Wind 2. Memory Lane/Dalanginan 3. Heart of Mine 4. Boiling Point/Queen's Gambit 5. Camille Molly
Race 6--1. Claro Di Ba 2. Dedicated 3. My Prayer 4. Ariana's Pride
Race 7--1. Hummingbird 2. Jerold's Dream 3. Color of the Wind 4. Brenda Starr 5. Society's Pleasure
Race 8--1. Nokaba 2. Red Rose 3. Loose Cannon 4. Prickly Heat 5. Brusko
Race 9--1. Duty Bound 2. Moneyline 3. Expediter 4. Incrediview 5. Trail Blazer 6. Aba Aba Aba/King Yoji



Jenny, Caregiver in New York

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La Consolacion prof tries a Winona

SHE must've entertained thoughts she was smart enough to mimic Hollywood actress Winona Ryder.

Well, just like Ms Ryder, she was caught.

Eleonor Perez, 24, a college professor at the La Consolacion Col-

CONSOLACION/ A21

DEBRIS left in the wake of the UP Diliman accident Tuesday night includes the fallen bumper of the BMW car which reportedly had two drunken men as occupants.
JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

Wild BMW rakes through UP dorm

5 students hit on ramp; 3 victims fighting for life

By Agnes Donato

FIVE students, waiting on the sidewalk for a concert to start at the UP Diliman, sustained grave injuries when a rushing BMW car crashed through them Tuesday night.

Three of the victims who suffered severe head injuries were still unconscious and fighting for their life at press time.

They were identified as Precious Blado, 20; Gwendolyn Puyat, 17; and Merryl Antonio, all UP students.

The two other victims, Gian Carla Ambrosio, also of UP, and Gerry Hipol of the Polytechnic University of the Philippines, sustained injuries in the head and body.

The car, whose two occupants were visibly drunk according to cops, fell on its side and stalled after jumping on the sidewalk and raking through the waiting students.

The accident's impact caused the BMW's front bumper to fall off.

Police had yet to identify who between the two occupants of the BMW car was driving when the accident took place at about 6:30 p.m in front of the Kamia Residence Hall in UP Diliman.

Special Police Investigator Mel Ongay said that Richard Ong had told him after the accident that he was the driver of the BMW (Plate NO. BPS 111).

Ong's cousin and companion, Dick Kenneth Soriano, however, later identified himself to the UP Police desk officer as the driver, Ongay claimed.

The cousins were reportedly reeking of liquor when police brought them to the UP Infirmary for treatment of the bruises they sustained in the accident.

Charges of reckless imprudence resulting in multiple serious physical injuries will be filed against them.

Initial investigation showed that the victims were seated on the sidewalk in front of the dormitory and waiting for a concert to begin when the accident took place.

A table blocked, which blocked their view of the road, prevented the victims from seeing the fast approaching BMW as it suddenly swung to its right and went up the ramp.

The car hit the victims and stopped only after it fell on its side.

Ongay said that Baldo suffered a fractured skull and has not regained consciousness.

Doctors at the Veterans Memorial Medical Center reportedly described her chances of survival as very slim.

Both Puyat and Antonio, confined at the St. Luke's Hospital and the East Avenue Medical Center respectively, were still unconscious as of presstime.

Ambrosio and Hipol were also treated at the East Avenue Medical Center.

Students, led by the UP Anido student organization, were set to stage a candle-lighting rite at the site of the accident last.

DRILON

Ces Drilon hurt as gov't vehicle bumps her new CRV

BROADCAST journalist Ces Drilon was hurt when a government vehicle bumped her car on Commonwealth Avenue in Quezon City Tuesday night.

Cecilia Victoria Drilon, 40, who hosts the late night program "Pipol," sustained minor head injury and was treated in a nearby clinic.

PO3 Venus Ormita, traffic investigator, said that Drilon, of Times Street, Fairview, Quezon City, was driving home on board a brand-new Honda CRV (with conduction sticker No. 85TZC) when the accident took place at about 11:45 p.m. Tuesday.

Drilon was reportedly about to exit a Shell gasoline station near the Commission on Human Rights on Commonwealth Avenue when a speeding Mitsubishi Pajero (Plate No. SEU 401) hit the left rear end of her car.

The Pajero was reportedly registered to the National Power Corp. (Napocor) and was being driven by one Dante Luarez, 30.

Luarez immediately turned himself in after the accident, saying he was not able to see Drilon's car coming from the gas station due to poor visibility.

Drilon suffered a bruise on the forehead as a result of the the impact.

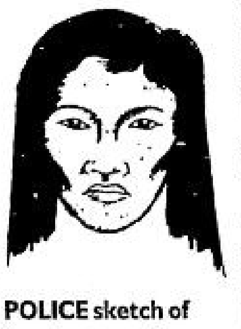
Charges of reckless imprudence resulting in damage to property and physical injury will be filed against Luarez.

Police estimated the damage to Drilon's car at P100,000.

Agnes Donato

Police eyeing single group in twin robs

By Christian V. Esguerra



POLICE sketch of female suspect.

THE ROBBERS who stormed two banks in Parañaque and Mandaluyong within a four-day interval could be part of a big-time syndicate operating in Metro Manila, police said yesterday.

Parañaque police chief Rolando Estilles noted that the robbers in both incidents disguised themselves as depositors in studying their targets before conducting the actual heist.

And as in the Prudential Bank robbery in Sucat last Feb. 12, the PBC branch incident in Mandaluyong last Monday also involved heavily armed men with a female companion, the officer said.

Estilles invited the Mandaluyong police to check the identity of Teresita Riwa who was identified by another suspect as among those who had entered Prudential Bank and disarmed its security guards.

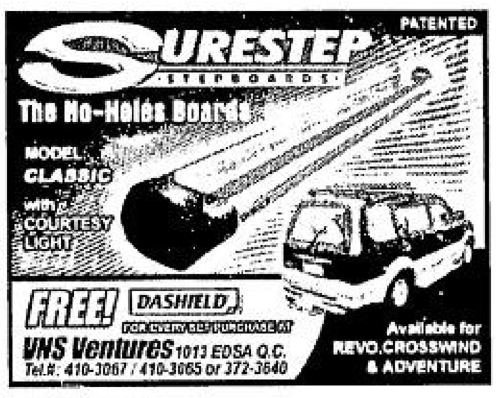
Riwa, a resident of Western Bicutan in Taguig, is in her late twenties, about 5'2" tall, brown complexioned with shoulder-length hair, her nephew Alvin Aranas told investigators.

Aranas, together with suspect Mark Lanada, was charged with robbery before the city prosecutor's office yesterday, according to Estilles.

Last Monday, police raided communities in Las Piñas and Taguig and arrested six suspects, including Aranas. But authorities had to release the suspects, except for Aranas, after witnesses failed to identify them.

Estilles said he and his men were looking for the group's leader who was identified only as "master."

Quoting Lanada, he said the gang leader is about 5'8" tall, burly, and with mestizo features. The man could be the same suspect who had directed traffic in front of the Prudential branch and fired at two policemen approaching the bank, he added.



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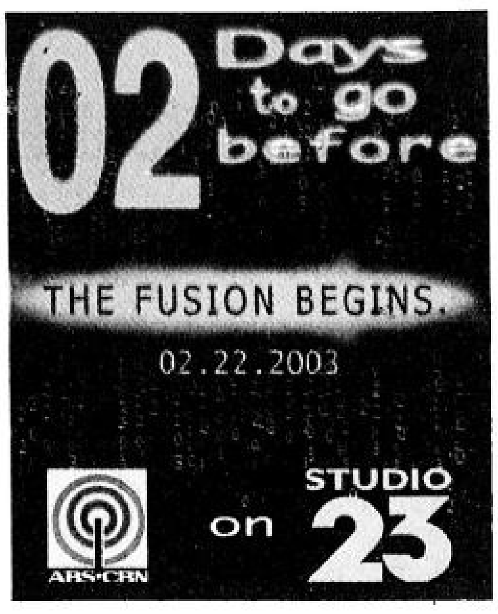

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MABINI ☎ 525.1474	STREETLIFE MIXED-UP / SAINTS	NO ENTRANCE FEE
MALATE ☎ 521.8143	FAT 16 KOOLJACKS	NO ENTRANCE FEE
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BIÑAN ☎(049)511.7268	MR. ROXY ICE KENDI	ORIENT PEARL FEB.27
TIA MARIA'S	TIA MARIA'S	TIA MARIA'S
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TOMAS MORATO ☎ 371.1473	FIRST SIGHT	NO ENTRANCE FEE

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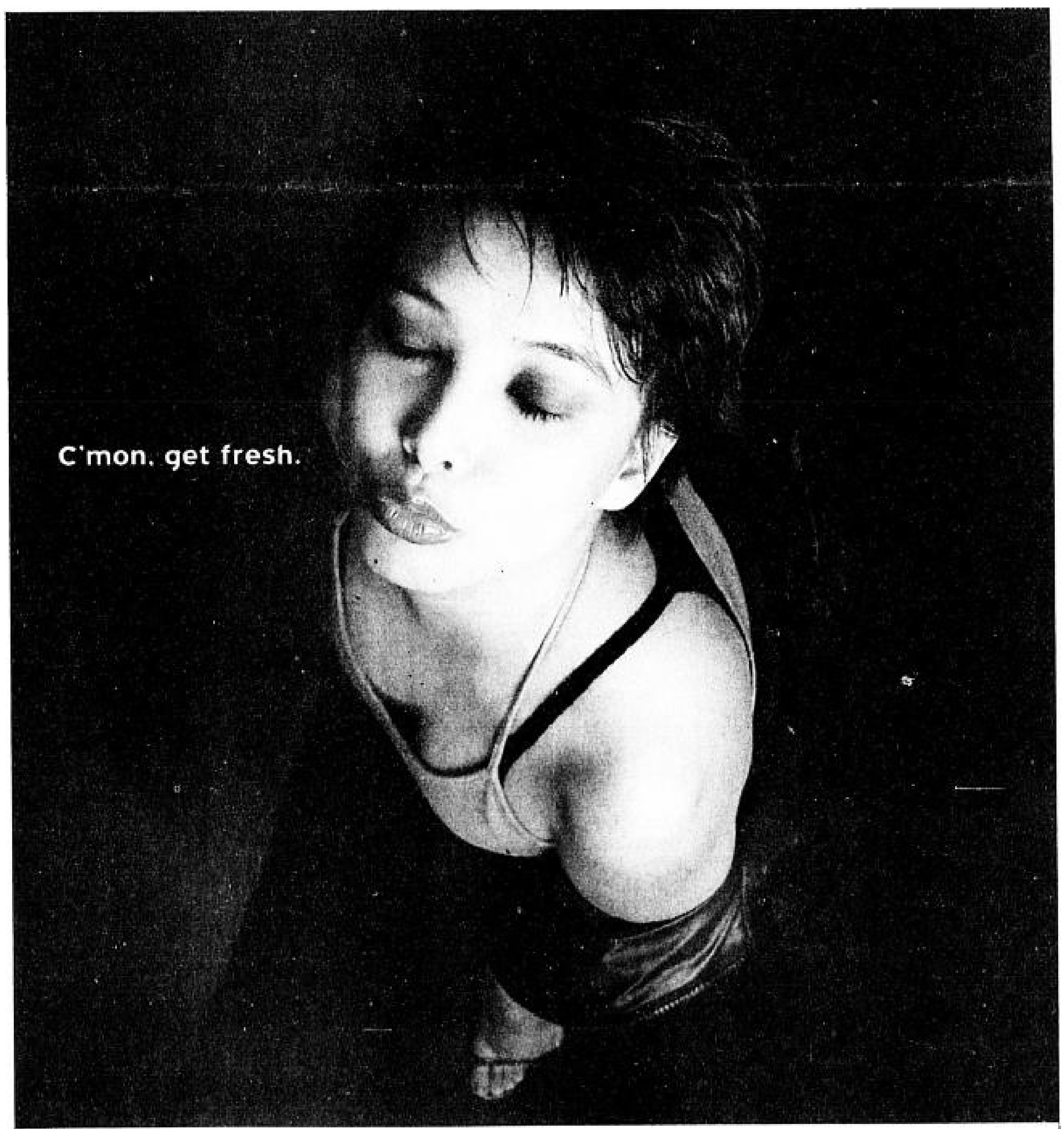

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Darna! She never looked so good!

Bulacan judge caught taking grease money

By Philip Tubeza

THE CAREER of Bulacan Judge Henry L. Domingo ended on Monday after National Bureau of Investigation agents arrested him as he was receiving a P20,000 bribe which he allegedly demanded from a litigant.

NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco said Domingo, a judge of the Municipal Trial Court of San Ildefonso, was nabbed during an entrapment operation in a restaurant in Baliuag, Bulacan.

Lawyer Elfren Meneses, NBI Anti-Fraud and Computer Crimes Division chief, said the litigant, Ildefonso V. Cuevas, went to Domingo's sala on Feb. 7 for a hearing on his case.

Cuevas is on trial for falsifying public documents.

After a while, Domingo motioned Cuevas to follow him to his chamber, Meneses said. Inside, the judge allegedly told Cuevas to meet him at the La Familia restaurant in Baliuag, Bulacan on Valentine's Day.

Meneses said Cuevas sensed that the judge was asking for money and it was then he sought the NBI's help.

On Feb. 14, NBI agents followed Cuevas to the restaurant and saw him talk to the judge.

The following day, the complainant told investigators that Domingo had demanded a bribe in exchange for a favorable decision.

Although the judge did not ask for a specific amount, Domingo allegedly agreed to accept P20,000.

The NBI set an entrapment operation and Cuevas prepared P10,000 in marked money, and a check for the remaining P10,000.

The complainant and Domingo met again in La Familia at around 2:30 p.m. on Monday.

At the restaurant, the judge asked for the money.

When Cuevas gave it to him, the NBI agents pounced on Domingo, who was caught still holding the marked peso bills and the check.

He was brought to the NBI office and was later charged with direct bribery and the violation of the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act before the Office of the Ombudsman.

Domingo was released after he posted bail.

DENNIS SABANGAN

HAVE GUN, WILL ROB

This is a .38-caliber revolver taken from a suspected robber who preyed on students and commuters on Taft Avenue in Manila. Strewn on the table are his victims' ATM and identification cards of which there are too many to count.

7 hurt in MMDA road clearing in Caloocan

By Tina Santos

THE METRO Manila Development Authority's sidewalk clearing operations continue to draw blood after seven persons, including a 15-year-old boy and two MMDA men, were reportedly hurt during Monday night's operations at the Bonifacio Monument in Caloocan City.

Those reported injured were vendors Benedicto Tiu, 15, Armando Urata, 50, Robert Altos, 34, Albert Salvador, 23, and Anthony Hunti, 47; and MMDA men Libereto Simbulan, 35, and Jaime Espina, 32.

According to the initial investigation, a Loida Salvador led a team of MMDA men in clearing the sidewalks on Benin Street in Monumento at around 5:30 p.m. Monday.

The injured MMDA men and the vendors have been swapping charges at the Caloocan police's intelligence and investigation division.

First to file charges were Simbulan and Espina, who claimed that even before they could start the operation, the vendors began throwing stones at the MMDA men.

"They started throwing stones at us when they saw us coming out of the bus," one of the MMDA men said. "What did they expect us to do? Just watch them? Of course we have no choice but to defend ourselves."

The vendors, particularly Tiu and Urata, also filed charges against the MMDA personnel, whom they accused of abuse of authority when they began using wooden canes to beat up the vendors.

Witnesses said the operation almost turned into a free-for-all.

When the smoke cleared, the seven victims were sprawled on the ground, bleeding.

This is not the first time Salvador and her men got into trouble with Caloocan.

Recently, members of the Caloocan-Monumento Vendors Association have pressed charges against Salvador and her crew for allegedly violating several laws in conducting their sidewalk clearing operations.

Baron family on Maganto: He can get the job done

By Christian Esguerra

THE FAMILY of slain government informant Baron Cervantes yesterday stood by beleaguered Chief Supt. Romeo Maganto, who has been removed as lead investigator of the Romulo Kintanar assassination case.

"He still enjoys our full trust and confidence," said Cervantes' brother Lloyd. "We know he can get the job done. It's just a matter of time."

The brother said Maganto should not have yielded his position as chief of Task Force Kintanar because he was appointed by President Macapagal-Arroyo, not by Philippine National Police Chief Hermogenes Ebdane.

Ebdane has ordered Maganto to focus his efforts on hunting down the alleged Cervantes murder mastermind, Supt. Rafael Cardeño, and keep his hands off the Kintanar investigation.

"Logic tells us that Ebdane could not overrule the President," Lloyd said. "Maganto has a direct appointment from the President."

Before Ms Macapagal tapped Maganto to go after Kintanar's killers, she had ordered him to organize his own police task force to hunt down the fugitive Cardeño.

The Cervantes family had asked the President to activate the general from floating status and handle the case because of Ebdane's failure to locate the high-profile fugitive for more than a year.

Maganto said he had been using the same task force—composed of only 27 men—in the Cervantes case to carry out the President's latest order, when Ebdane shoved him out of the Kintanar case.

"Despite all these accomplishments, I was eased out of the investigation simply because of some envious police officials," he said. "It took police and the NBI more than two years to solve the Nida Blanca case. I spent only 20 days to solve the Kintanar case and this is what I got?"

Can we make a fresh start?

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Murder rap downgraded

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

THREE members of a family were killed in Sta. Barbara, Pangasinan more than two years ago by a man brandishing an M-16 Armalite rifle. One member of the family survived to tell the story.

Slain were Pedro Macaraeg, 50; Chito Philip Calem, 32, a balikbayan; and Armando Macaraeg, 19.

Danilo Macaraeg, 17, also took a bullet but survived.

* * *

Fifteen days earlier, on Nov. 28, 2000, one of the victims had an altercation with the alleged assailant, Bernardo Untalan, over a minor traffic incident.

Untalan caught the victims by surprise as it was nighttime.The victims were easy targets as a result.

Cases of multiple murder and frustrated murder were filed against Untalan and his co-accused, Roberto Jorgio, a barangay kagawad, and Marcial Estrada, who acted as look-outs for Untalan.

* * *

But you know what? The Pangasinan Prosecutor's Office downgraded the murder complaint to the much lesser offense of homicide.

As a result, Untalan was able to post bail and is now in hiding.

* * *

Any lawyer will tell you that the complaint should have been murder, a heinous crime and hence, non-bailable.

All the elements that constituted murder were present when the victims were killed: premeditation, use of superior force, and nighttime.

Premeditation, because the assailant or assailants were motivated by revenge after a quarrel with one of the victims, Armando Macaraeg, 15 days earlier. The assailant apparently had plenty of time to think of committing the crime. Use of superior force, because he used an M-16 automatic rifle while the complainants were unarmed and caught by surprise. And nighttime, because it was 9 p.m.

Where did the prosecutors in Pangasinan finish law?

* * *

One of the reasons the New People's Army (NPA) is attracting more members and sympathizers is the inability of the judicial system—the courts and the prosecution service—to render justice to the poor and ignorant.

Many judges and prosecutors can be bribed. In cases where the rich are ranged against the poor, the rich win because they have paid off the judge and the prosecutor.

In remote barrios, people whose goats or carabaos were stolen by rustlers go to the NPAs. The NPA justice is quick: If the accused is found guilty after a summary hearing, he is immediately executed.

* * *

If President Magsaysay were alive today, he would be disappointed by the way our judicial system operates.

"Those who have less in life should have more in law." Those were Magsaysay's words in reference to court litigants who are poor or ignorant.

It's now entirely different. Those who have power, influence or wealth have more chances of winning cases in the courts or at the prosecutor's office.

Brother Mike eyes 1 million for anti-war rally at Luneta

By Norman Bordadora

MORE than one million people are expected to gather at the Rizal Park on Sunday afternoon in what El Shaddai leader Mike Velarde said would be the largest demonstration of faith against a possible United States-led war on Iraq.

El Shaddai and the Iglesia ni Cristo, both capable of mobilizing hundreds of thousands, have announced their participation in the huge prayer rally for peace organized by the multi-sectoral Bangon Pilipino coalition.

"God has the supreme power to settle everything. Everyone is invited to pray together to make them believe that a community in prayer is the most powerful tool for peace," Velarde, a member of the steering committee of Bangon Pilipino, said in a news conference yesterday.

"There have been many demonstrations against war in the Middle East but there has never been a huge demonstration of faith (as this prayer rally promises to be)," he added.

Asked if President Macapagal-Arroyo had been invited to the rally, Velarde said, "Everybody is invited, from the President down to the last Filipino who loves peace."

He clarified that no special invitation was sent to the President.

Aside from the two religious groups, other organizations supporting the prayer rally are the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines, Philippines Incorporated and the Integrated Metropolitan Bus Operators' Association.

"All buses plying near Luneta will give a 50-percent discount to those going to attend, courtesy of Imboa president Claire dela Fuente," Velarde said.

Intelligence agent shot dead

By Tina Santos

EVEN if he was armed with a .45 pistol, police intelligence agent Maximo dela Rama failed to fire his weapon and defend himself against four armed men who waylaid him and then shot him to death along a busy thoroughfare in Navotas last Monday.

Police found Dela Rama's loaded pistol beside his body. They also found on him an extra clip with seven bullets and a 10-inch knife.

Navotas police chief Supt. Billy Beltran said Dela Rama, 48, of R10 Road, Northbay Boulevard South, Navotas, died from three gunshot wounds in the head.

He also suffered a bullet wound in the armpit, Beltran said.

Police said that Dela Rama, who was also a fish dealer, was on his bicycle along R10 Road at 8:10 p.m. when four men on board a gray Toyota sedan waylaid him.

Witnesses told police that two of the suspects drew .38 pistols and repeatedly shot Dela Rama.

The suspects escaped in their car after the shooting, but witnesses failed to get the vehicle's license plate number.

Police found on Dela Rama a document from the National Headquarters Citizen Community Group and a Philippine National Police ID.

Pyramid scam victims arrest suspects

By Philip C. Tubeza

SEVERAL victims of a fraudulent pyramid scheme arrested the couple who allegedly gypped them of about P50 million in Muntinlupa City then turned over the suspects to the National Bureau of Investigation.

NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco identified the suspects as Deserie D. Ocampo, 21, of B3 L35 Camella Homes, Alabang IV-A, Poblacion, Muntinlupa City and Roberto D. Rojas, 32, of RMT Industrial Complex, Tunasan, also in Muntinlupa.

The pair allegedly tricked at least 50 people into investing large amounts of money into a project to buy pre-paid cell phone cards by the bulk by promising the victims "high returns" on their investments.

The suspects were supposed to remit the profits from the sale of cell cards as interest on the victims' investments, said Assistant Regional Director Ruel Lasala, head of the NBI Reaction, Arrest and Investigation Division (Raid).

The victims told investigators that the couple had issued them post-dated checks representing the returns on their investments. But the checks later bounced because the couple had already closed their bank account.

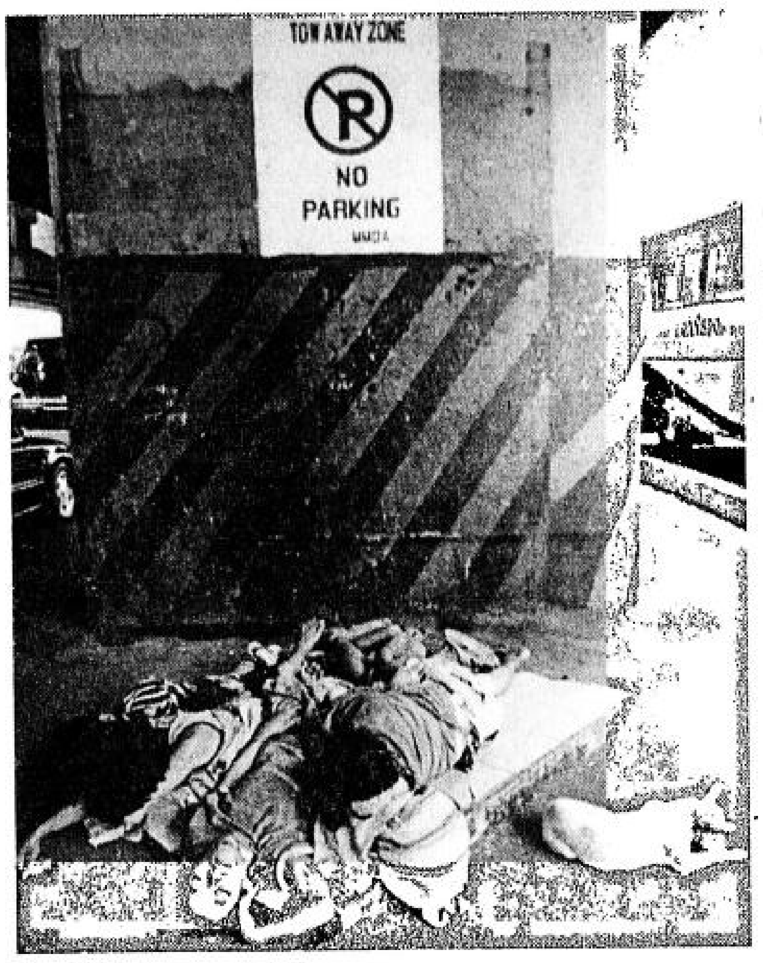
The victims said they later learned that Rojas and Ocampo did not really invest their money on cell cards and that the interest they received came from the money of other complainants, Lasala said.

The victims then demanded their money from the pair.

When the couple failed to return the money, the victims themselves set up an entrapment operation against the suspects and arrested them.

NBI agents brought the suspects to the Muntinlupa City Prosecutor's Office on Monday and charged them with syndicated estafa, violation of the Bouncing Check Law, and the Securities Regulation Code, Lasala said.

The suspects are detained at the NBI jail.



SLEEPERS
With only a piece of board for their bed, street children sleep the night away under the Edsa flyover in Quezon City. JOAN BONDOC

500 families lose homes in slum fire

By Tina Santos

MORE than 500 families were left homeless after a one-hour fire razed a slum community in Valenzuela City yesterday morning.

Police said the fire was triggered by a faulty electrical wiring in the house of Antonio Basi on Santiago Street.

Witnesses said that before the fire, they saw smoke billowing from Basi's house following a spark in the roof.

FO2 Melchor Gonzales of the Valenzuela Fire Bureau said the fire began at 6:10 a.m. and quickly spread to adjoining houses.

About 100 houses were lost in the fire, which was placed under control after 30 minutes and was eventually put out at 7:05 a.m.

No one was reported killed or injured in the blaze, said arson investigators who placed the damage at about P10 million.

Affected residents were temporarily relocated to the nearby basketball court and barangay hall.

QC goes hi-tech

By Agnes Donato

FOLLOWING City Hall's purchase of 400 new personal computer (PC) units, the Quezon City Council yesterday approved an ordinance requiring all local government employees to undergo computer training.

The ordinance directed the Task Force Quezon City Information Technology (TFQCIT) to conduct training for all city hall workers in the proper use of computers in the workplace.

"Despite the development in the field of Information Technology, there is still a great number of Quezon City employees who are not familiar with the use of the computer," the ordinance said.

It said that the training program would include all regular and contractual employees who hold clerical, technical, supervisory and executive positions, except those who are already versed in the use of computers.

The TFQCIT's Yhoy Silva said that QC had actually started computerizing its system last year. He said that the IT department had procured 400 new PCs recently to ensure that there would be a closer ratio between the number of employees and computer units.

Consolacion prof tries a Winona

From page A19

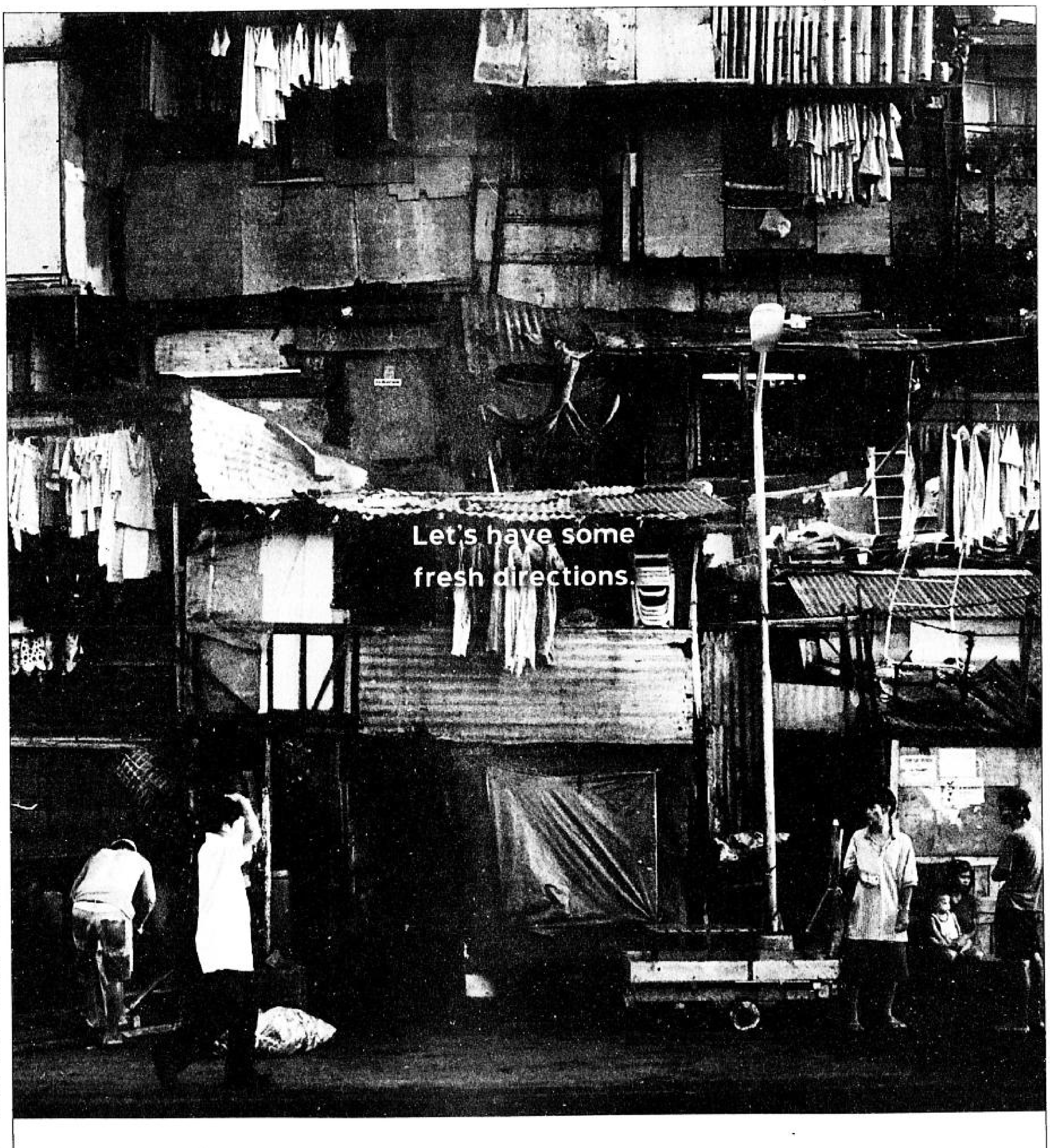
lege, was hauled off to jail after she was caught shoplifting a bottle of perfume from a store at the Gotesco Grand Central Mall in Rizal Avenue Extension, Monumento, Caloocan Monday night.

Appropriate charges have been filed against Perez, a resident of University Avenue Extension, Potrero, Malabon, before the Caloocan Police station and intelligence division for shoplifting 100 ml bottle of Wire perfume worth P280.

Police said that, prior to the arrest, the suspect was seen roaming inside the store at around 8:25 p.m. and went out only when it was about to close down.

However, when Perez was about to leave the store's premises, the alarm device suddenly rang out thereby prompting security guards to run after her and check her bag where the perfume was found.

The suspect was immediately brought to the police headquarters and locked up.



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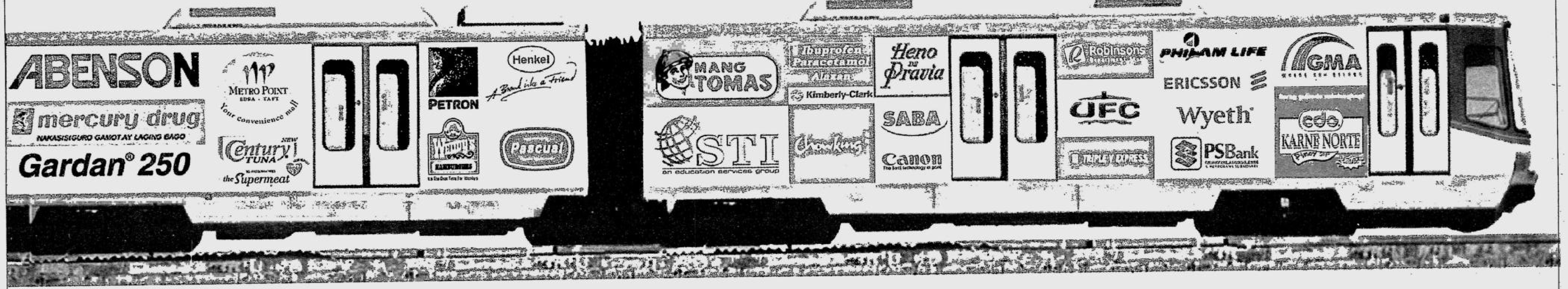
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ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Louie C. Camino

When the tail wags the dog

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

THE LOCAL show biz scene is in such a mess that some viewers have just about given up on it. — Don't! It's the only one we have.

And, if "intelligent" people give up on local entertainment, it's quickly going to go from bad to worse—that's no solution! So, stay in there, take the bad along with the good, keep reacting and evaluating, and make sure that your opinion is heard by as many people as possible.

Many people sniffily and snittily grouse about local show biz's excesses with their friends, and grumpily leave it at that. Well, that's not going to help much, is it?

The thing is to get many people's attention, so you've got to write letters to newspapers, and call or e-mail producers, channels, studios or stations. Not only will you have a better chance of getting your complaint acted on, but you'll also prompt other members of the audience to care about the entertainment they get.

You've got to care about show biz. That means that you've got to go beyond its entertainment value, to a better appreciation of its power to affect, influence and change people, for good or for bad.

It's an important distinction. Most people take show biz at its most superficial level—if you're entertained, you like it; if you aren't, you move on to something else. But entertainment isn't as shallow as it seems—it's downright powerful! So, we've all got to take it more seriously.

When a sex flick exploits its female characters, is that just an erotic turn-on, or are there unsavory messages there that affect the way we regard women, and thus relate to them in our own lives?

If noontime TV shows pander sexy images and erotic innuendo even as many minors are watching, is everybody just being funny and naughty, or are our children being told that it's "in" and "kuwela" to be a malicious-minded and leer at women?

If an actress who can't sing cuts an album that showcases her lack of talent, is that just making hay while the sun shines, or are members in the audience being told that mediocrity isn't a bad thing as long as you've got the clout and connections?

Show biz people say that they're merely reflecting what exists in society, and giving people what they want. Truth to tell, however, we see more responsible people in society than in show biz.

So, what we have here is more a case of the tail impudently wagging the dog. Trouble is, the dog (that's us) is too clueless to know that it's being wagged by that nasty, smelly tail!

We've got to know. How dare some vile show biz people manipulate us, when we have the numbers to put them in their proper place? Unfortunately, we don't know how to use our numerical strength to our advantage, and just let the unprincipled people in show biz manipulate us all the way.

Well, it's time that they stop. And we're the ones who can stop them—for our and our families good. Let's continue to enjoy being entertained, but let's also look at show biz with more enlightened, savvy eyes.

'X2'

"X2," the sequel to "X-Men," presents the film series' mutant superheroes with a new nemesis—William Stryker, played by **Brian Cox. Kelly Hu** ("The Scorpion King") also stars as an ultra-cool villain, Lady Deathstrike.

New mutants will also be introduced in "X2." They are Colossus, Gambit, Pyro, Iceman and Nightcrawler. Stars include **Hugh Jackman** as Wolverine, **Halle Berry** as Storm, **Patrick Stewart** as Prof. Xavier, **James Marsden** as Cyclops, **Anna Paquin** as Rogue and **Famke Jannsen** as Jean Grey.

Andrew E. and Ogie A

YOUNG comedians **Ogie Alcasid** and **Andrew E** appear for the first time on the big screen in the film "A.B. Normal College," a comedy directed by **Al Tantay**.

They play classmates in a really crazy campus with madcap characters portrayed by other comedians, plus stars like **Rufa Mae Quinto, Mikey Arroyo** and **Patricia Javier**.

The film also introduces a sexy 19-year-old named **Jenny Rosendahl**, who plays Gregoria, the apple of Andrew E's eye. Her previous big-screen appearance was in "Gamitan," were she was cast as **Wendell Ramos**' girlfriend.

ASIAN HORROR OFFERING. Lawrence Chan and Angelica Lee in "The Eye."

'THE EYE'

More dead people and fewer scares

By Oliver M. Pulumbarit
Contributor

REVIEW

LOOK what "The Sixth Sense" has done.

M. Night Shyamalan's movie, where Haley Joel Osment sees dead people, set off a whole new wave of cerebral supernatural thrillers such as "The Others" and "The Mothman Prophecies." Almost three years after that quintessential film, its influence can still be felt, most recently in the Asian horror offering, "The Eye" (a.k.a. "Jian Gui").

Set in contemporary Hong Kong, "The Eye" follows Mun (Lee Sin Jie), a young woman who has been blind since she was two.

After undergoing a successful cornea transplant, she gradually regains her sight, but with an unexpected price. She can now see dead people.

But that's not all, she sees vague, silhouetted men without faces, who she believes may be "fetching" the recently departed. Mun convinces her therapist Dr. Lo (Lawrence Chou) to help her find out the truth about her newfound second sight. Now psychically-attuned, she becomes a magnet for inexplicable phenomena.

Brothers Oxide and Danny Pang directed the movie, and co-wrote the story with Jojo Hui. "The Eye" is largely inspired by ideas and cinematic techniques already seen in the Western horror genre, but it's written with an innately Asian flavor and belief in superstitious semantics, which can make it a potential hit with Filipinos.

If the subtitled "Ringu" and its remake are any indication, people looking for genuine chills will flock to this one, too.

Word of mouth worked well for that Japanese film and its Hollywood version, and it appears that "The Eye" will receive curious interest from the same moviegoers.

But don't expect an original frightener in the "Ringu" vein. At best, "The Eye" is a familiar mish-mash of Shyamalan's movie, Sam Raimi's "The Gift", Neil Jordan's "In Dreams," and yes, even "Ringu."

Scare tactics

Make no mistake, though. This film is still its own movie. The Pang brothers employ several methods that make this ghost movie scary, but only sporadically.

What we get are extra-prolonged sequences of Mun's visions. We accept that what she sees from the start are restless and/or recently departed spirits, and it's no surprise when they'll appear next. At least it's no surprise most of the time.

What's jolting is what these manifestations will do next when they appear.

One ghost with a deformed head, for instance, keeps popping up in the elevator. Scenes like these can elicit nervous giggles because not all these spirits are benevolent. Again, "Sixth Sense" has done that before, with less obvious scare tactics.

Not that the Pangs didn't try to be clever. There's a particular scene you have to keep your eyes peeled for, the moment when Mun and Dr. Lo are talking in a subway train. Watch out for the glass window just above Mun: There are fleeting glimpses of "something" that won't be seen in subsequent scenes.

If only their attention to detail was this painstaking and absolute throughout the movie, it might've been more disturbing than it is.

Cliché meter

Music is obviously a big factor in creating mood, but in scenes where a potential love angle begins to bloom, the music just swells and blares and tends to overpower the visuals. It suddenly feels as if you're watching an entirely different movie altogether. When dark, foreboding music is played, it feels off-cue.

MORE/ A25

DA swaps thoughts on love with OA

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

FOR INCURABLE romantics like me, the Valentine mood never seems to wane. If there's one singer-songwriter who honors love's many mysteries (be it joyful, sorrowful or glorious) just as much as I do, it's **Ogie Alcasid**. He has a song for every stage and each kind of romance. But he's not one who would sing a song the same way twice. He hits you where it matters that's why his Onstage Greenbelt show is aptly titled "O.A. sa Puso."

O.A.? I believe that you cannot say you are overdoing anything if it's done out of love. When you truly love, you just can't seem to show it enough.

Ogie knows that too well, so if you still can't shake off your Valentine hangover, catch him on Feb 21 and 22 (with **Regine Velasquez**), Feb. 27 (with **Zsa Zsa Padilla**), Feb. 28 (with **Pops Fernandez**) and March 1 (with **Lani Misalucha**). Show starts 9 p.m.

I got to chat with Ogie and we swapped thoughts about this "heart month" and all its joys.

Dolly Anne: What's the most out-of-this-world thing you've done for love?

Ogie: It's when I proposed to my wife **Michelle (van Eimeren)**. I asked **Martin (Nievera)** to serenade her with his song, "Be My Lady." I hid the ring in the dessert and when the waiter served it, out comes Martin singing to her.

DA: How has your definition of love changed through the years (and tears)?

OA: I've always believed that it's the little things you do that all add up to something. Everyday you must not let any chance pass by to show your partner how much you love her.

Never assume that she already knows. It's always nice to be reminded of it, especially when you both get busy with other concerns.

Valentine's has become quite commercialized, but for whatever it's worth we should take time out to celebrate it. The important thing is that even when it's over, the loving feeling should linger.

You should not celebrate it just for the heck of it. If you find it too corny, then you don't know what love really is yet. *Lahat ng nai-in-love handang magapaka*-corny *at baduy minsan.*

DA: What advice can you give couples who have a vicious cycle of "make up-break up?"

OA: Couples should not drag other people into their relationship. You know how it is. The girl confides in her best friend then the guy opens up to his buddies. *'Pag nagpadala sa sulsol o buyo ang* either the girl or the boy, then the problem just gets worse.

Even if friends mean well, in the end it's only you and your partner who can really solve things.

DA: Is it harder to perform in a smaller venue like Onstage than a bigger one like Araneta?

OA: Absolutely. Because in smaller venues, you have to reach out to the audience more. *Dapat mas* intimate *ang dating*. You must try harder to make a connection. You really see the faces of your audience and up to now, it warms my heart when I see a guy suddenly holding the hand of his girlfriend once I sing a particular song that's memorable to them. It thrills me to be part of their love story somehow even just through my songs.

I'm more nervous for my Onstage show than when I did "OA sa Hits" in Araneta last year. But the love-struck audience makes me give my all every single night. *Parang may* "love virus" *sa* Greenbelt *sa dami* ng couples around.

Magnifico

KUDOS to the entire cast and crew of "Magnifico." The movie is indeed too magnificent for words.

Lead child actor **Jiro Manio** is a natural. All throughout the film, you would feel like hugging him to pieces.

Albert Martinez, Lorna Tolentino and **Gloria Romero** were superb.

It's heavy drama alright, but not to the point of ramming it down your throat. Light and candid moments are interspersed with the dramatic scenes hence, there's no overkill.

The movie touches you where it matters. It reminds you of something you already know deep within you which you have overlooked. It teaches you to live life to the fullest no matter how tough things sometimes get.

It also shows that we must embrace the inevitable state of dying. We should not be afraid of death if we know that in our own little way, we have made a dent in other people's lives. Such an impact we've had on others serves as our passport to immortality.

Dumped?

AT THE recent despedida party for **Cher Calvin**, who is soon moving to Fox Channel in Las Vegas, I got a chance to chat with **Lyn Tamayo**, the beleaguered manager of ex(?) Powerboys member **Geoff Rodriguez**. Reports have it that Lyn had a falling out with the four managers of the other members of the male group (**Jordan Herrera, Frank Garcia, Jay Salas** and **Greg Martin**), that's why Geoff was dumped from Powerboys.

Lyn seemed distraught, so to lighten the mood, I asked, "*Di na ba kaya ng* powers *mo* to deal with the Powerboys' different managers?"

She sighed, "I've been managing talents for so many years now. Modesty aside, my track record speaks for itself. It's hard to deal with a manager whose background is commercial modelling.

"My orientation is show biz, so I know the feel of the market. I meant well. It's just too bad that the four other managers think I have a hidden agenda.

"Ask anybody privy to the boys, it's Jeff who's the most behaved in the group. *Nadadamay lang siya sa* tardiness and attitude problem of others. That's why I heard 'MTB' won't renew their contract anymore when they reformat this month. Eventually, they will see for themselves what I mean."

Personal

BIRTHDAY cheers to my well-loved all-around buddy **Ray Fuentes**.

Happy anniversary to mon amour de ma vie, **A.S.**

For feedback, e-mail friends_at_dsquare@yahoo.com or jaimealsan@yahoo.com

Back-to-back at Captain's Bar

LIVING up to its promise of excellent performances from brilliant artists every month, 105.1 Crossover's highly acclaimed concert series is back for a fresh round of live musical magic.

Tonight at the Captain's Bar of the Mandarin Oriental, Verni Varga and versatile vocal group The CompanY go back-to-back in "Crossover Presents," for an evening of favorite Crossover and contemporary jazz tunes.

Through the years that she has been singing in lounges, performing in concerts and TV shows, Verni's appeal and mesmerizing voice never fail to get the audience hooked to her brand of music. She is an artist who always aspires to find depth and meaning in every song and conveys the passion that she feels for her craft with every performance.

The CompanY, composed of Sweet Plantado, Annie Quintos, Cecile Bautista, Reuben Castillo, Andre Castillo and Moy Ortiz, has been the country's longest running vocal harmony act, whose songs have become anthems for many Filipinos.

Veterans of the concert scene, the CompanY have had the privilege of sharing the stage with international artists like The Manhattan Transfer, Jim Brickman, Noel Pointer, John Ford Coley, David Pack, Ambrosia, Survivor, Kalapana and Kenny Rankin.

Verni will perform timeless hits like Marlena Shaw's "Rhythm of Love," Natalie Cole's "Like KOA Lover," Dianhe Schuur's "Love Dance" and Seawind's "Devil Is a Liar" and "Free?"

The CompanY will render tunes like "Great Day," "Pakisabi na Lang" and "Muntik na Kitang Minahal."

VARGA

Joining them onstage are some of the country's first-rate musicians—Mel Villena, Cesar Aguas, Bobby Taylo, Roy Mercado and The Opera, with musical director Gerard Salonga.

Another highlight of the evening will be the launch of the much-awaited CD compilation, "Best of Crossover Presents."

Instrumental group Da Capo sets the mood at 8 p.m.

For ticket inquiries, call the Crossover office at 712-9755 or 712-9764, Ticket World at 891-5610 or Captain's Bar of the Mandarin Oriental at 750-8888.

Lara Fabregas conducts yoga sessions at Gold's

HEALTH buffs insist on the invigorating rewards of yoga, even as cynics shrug it off as just another on-and-off fad. The lack of knowledge or experience with yoga generally explains its little appeal to many people.

Gold's Gym, the world's biggest chain of health clubs that recently opened its doors in Glorietta 3 in Makati City, aims to help promote yoga's reputation.

Gold's Gym now conducts yoga sessions with Lady Lara. The instructor is celebrity Lara Fabregas, among whose exploits is her recent winning of second place honors in an international regatta competition.

"People who find yoga weird don't really know what it is all about because of lack of information," Lara says. "But yoga has been around for about 7,000 years."

"Yoga gives you confidence," says Lara. "At the start you feel that your body doesn't want to bend, but after a few weeks your body begins stretching."

Lara herself started regularly practicing the discipline in Malaysia in 1994.

Yoga sessions with Lara Fabregas at Gold's Gym are held on Wednesdays and Fridays starting at 7 p.m. for the whole month of February.

NOW SHOWING

IT WAS ENDORSED THRU DEPED
ADVISORY NO. 29 SERIES OF 2002 DATED FEB. 11, 2003

MTRCB RATING G General Patronage | ALL AGES ADMITTED

Handog ng Violett Films para sa bawat PAMILYANG Pilipino

Pelikulang Punong Puno ng Puso PARA SA LAHAT!

Ms. GLORIA ROMERO Ms. CELIA RODRIGUEZ AMY AUSTRIA
DANILO BARRIOS MARK GIL CHERRY PIE PICACHE
ALBERT MARTINEZ TONTON GUTIERREZ
and LORNA TOLENTINO

Introducing
GIRLIE SEVILLA

ALLISON VII GONZALES, JON ROMANO & SUSAN AFRICA
ISABELLA DE LEON
DINDIN LLARENA JOSEPH ROBLE

Theme song sung by:
GARY VALENCIANO

JIRO MANIO as MAGNIFICO

Pelikula ni Maryo J. de los Reyes, dgpi.

Violett

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

DAREDEVIL
MARVEL

AYALA CINEMAS

HOT TREATS AT GREENBELT 3

For every purchase of one (1) Daredevil ticket at Greenbelt 3 entitles the customer to the following treats:

1. Up to 30% OFF on selected food items at all [illegible] outlets.

Shinkanzen · Gloria Maris Work Shop · Mama Nita's Kitchen · Circo · Steak & Seafood Grill Coya · Tender Bob's Express · Thai BBQ · Andale Sorabol · Bellini's · Toast · Cheesecake etc · Taqueria Chilanga · Bar Ciao · Sabroll · Malahan · I Love Cakes by Claudette's · Candy Corner · Pazzo Gelato

2. FREE two (2) non-redemption game passes at TIMEZONE Greenbelt 3. Limited use of one pass per person per day only.

NOW SHOWING AT ALL AYALA CINEMAS

PER DTI NCR Permit No. AI-104, Series of 2003

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MMTA
METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION

MOVIE GUIDE
NOW SHOWING
EMAIL: mmta@asia.com

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72
1 (DOLBY) ABANDON
2 (SDDS) SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
3 (DTS) DARE DEVIL
4 GOLD (SDDS) TWO WEEKS NOTICE
5 GOLD (DOLBY EX) THEY
6 GOLD (SDDS) DAREDEVIL
7 GOLD (DOLBY EX) DAREDEVIL
8 MAGNIFICO
9 THE EYE
10 AMAZON

Pearl Plaza Cinemas
(Parañaque) tel. 853.4486
1 BUKANG BIBIG
2 TOMAGANS
3 (DTS) TWO WEEKS NOTICE
4
5 BETTER THAN SEX
6 (DTS)
Golden Pearl THX

Masagana CINEMA 1 2 & 3
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274
1 TOMAGANS
2 DAREDEVIL
3 BUKANG BIBIG

starmall Movies
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Mandaluyong) tel 724.4986
1 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
2 AB NORMAL
3 TOMAGANS
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) DAREDEVIL
5 AMAZON

METROPOLIS star
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Alabang) tel 850.4285
1 AB NORMAL
2 SUKDULAN
3 DAREDEVIL
4 TOMAGANS
5 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
6 AMAZON

M star
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Las Pinas)
tel 873.5004
1 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
2 AB NORMAL

PREMIERE CINEMA THX
(Makati City) tel 751.2010 to13
DAREDEVIL

Center Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 HERO
2 I SPY

FCM FAIRVIEW CENTER MALL INC
tel 930.9515
1
2 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
3 TOMAGANS

Sunshine
(FTI, Taguig) tel 838.4301 loc. 3376
1 HERO
2 TOMAGANS
3 SHIRLEY
4

GOTESCO CINEMA

Gotesco City
(Manila) tel 734.8588
1 (SDDS) DAREDEVIL
4 TOMAGANS
5 AMAZON
6 AB NORMAL
7 (DTS) DAREDEVIL
8 (SDDS) ABANDON
9 (DOLBY) SHANGHAI KNIGHTS

Gotesco Caloocan
tel 362.3508
2 RESERVE

Gotesco Grand Central
(Caloocan) tel 365.7928
1 AB NORMAL
2 SUKDULAN
3 TOMAGANS
4 (SDDS) DAREDEVIL
5 AMAZON
6 (DOLBY) SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
7 (DTS) DAREDEVIL
8 MAGNIFICO
9 THEY

Gotesco Commonwealth
tel 951.0082
1 TOMAGANS
2 (SDDS) SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
3 (DTS) DAREDEVIL
4 (DOLBY) DAREDEVIL
5 AB NORMAL

Gotesco Ortigas
tel 656.6795
1 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
2 AMAZON
3 (DTS) DAREDEVIL
4 TOMAGANS
5 (SDDS) DAREDEVIL

Universal
(Manila) tel 733.2470
1 DAREDEVIL

Sampaguita
(Cubao) tel 911.7888
1 TOMAGANS

Dilson
(Manila) tel 734.7724
Dilson TOMAGANS
Lords TOMAGANS
Jennet

MARKETPLACE Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856
1 TOMAGANS
2 DAREDEVIL
3 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
4

Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
SUPER CINERAMA
tel 733.4238
1 (DOLBY) DAREDEVIL
2 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
3 BUKANG BIBIG
4 TOMAGANS
5 AMZON

FRC Cinema
(Talaba Bacoor Cavite)
1
2

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 TOMAGANS
2 DAREDEVIL

THE CENTER OF ENTERTAINMENT
Araneta

MALL CINEPLEX 7
tel 911.3101 loc. 821/8242 8400
1 AB NORMAL
2 ABANDON
3 (DOLBY DIGITAL) SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
4 (SDDS) DAREDEVIL
5 (DTS) DAREDEVIL
6 TWO WEEKS NOTICE
7 ABANDON

FarmersPlaza CINEMAS
tel 911.3101 loc. 821/8242/8400
1 TOMAGUNS
2 DAREDEVIL

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall
(Sta. Rosa Laguna)
TEL. (049) 837-0826, 534-2185
1 MATAMIS HANGGANG DULO
2 AB NORMAL
3 DAREDEVIL

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
2 (DTS) THEY
3 (DOLBY) DAREDEVIL
4 HERO

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146
1 THEY
2 (DOLBY) SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
3 (DTS) DAREDEVIL
4 HERO

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
1 SPECIAL SCREENING
2 AB NORMAL
3 (DOLBY) SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
4

Cinema 2000 MetroTown
(Tarlac) tel(045) 982.1729
1 AB NORMAL
2 I SPY
3 (DOLBY) THEY
4 (DTS) FEMME FATALE

Magic Star Cinema
(Tarlac City) tel (045) 611.4305
1 (DOLBY) THEY
2 (DTS) I SPY
3 AB NORMAL

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 (SDDS) DAREDEVIL
2 AB NORMAL
3 (DTS) BUKANG BIBIG
4 TOMAGANS

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 (DOLBY) DAREDEVIL
2 AB NORMAL
3 (DTS) SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
4 FEMME FATALE
5 BETTER THAN SEX

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883
1 DAREDEVIL
2 AB NORMAL
3 SUKDULAN

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 249.2558
1 DAREDEVIL
2 TRY SEVENTEEN
3 BALAT SIBUYAS

Mega Center Mall
(Cabanatuan City) tel (044) 463.3283
1 AB NORMAL
2 TRY SEVENTEEN
3 (DTS) DAREDEVIL
4 (DOLBY) LORD OF THE RING

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel (049) 531.4808
1 (DTS) RESERVE
2 (DTS) RESERVE

Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657
1 BETTER THAN SEX
2 HERO
3 AB NORMAL

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 AB NORMAL
2 I SPY
3 DAREDEVIL
4 TWO WEEKS NOTICE

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045)887-5001 TO 03
1 (DOLBY EX) DAREDEVIL
2 AB NORMAL
3 (DTS ES) SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
4 FEMME FATALE

Cine Nepo Mall
(Angeles City) te (045) 887-0121
1 MAGNIFICO
2 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
3 (DOLBY) SHAOLIN SOCCER
4 (DTS) DAREDEVIL

*Movies are subject to change without prior notice

ADVANCED SCREENING THX DOLBY dts SDDS

FESTIVAL CINEMA
Level 4
Festival Supermall
Filinvest - Alabang
Tel, 85035-71 to 72

Daredevil
NOW SHOWING

SM CINEMA
SM Dial-A-Movie Tel. 833-9999
NOW SHOWING

SM CITY BACOOR
4173888
1 AMAZON
2 AB NORMAL COLLEGE
3 DAREDEVIL
4 THEY
5 DAREDEVIL
6 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
7 LEGEND OF TOMAGAN
8 MAGNIFICO

SM CENTERPOINT
7149622 -7161410
1 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
2 THE EYE
3 DAREDEVIL
4 AMAZON
5 DAREDEVIL
6 AB NORMAL COLLEGE
7 DAREDEVIL
8 THEY
9 ABANDON
10 MAGNIFICO

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
9350749
1 RING (JAPANESE)
2 HERO
3 MAGNIFICO
4 DAREDEVIL
5 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
6 AB NORMAL COLLEGE
7 DAREDEVIL
8 AMAZON
9 DAREDEVIL
10 THEY
11 SUKDULAN
12 LEGEND OF TOMAGAN

SM CITY MANILA
5239240
1 DAREDEVIL
2 THE EYE
3 ABANDON
4 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
5 TWO WEEKS NOTICE
6 DAREDEVIL
7 AMAZON
8 LEGEND OF TOMAGAN
9 DAREDEVIL
10 THEY
11 AB NORMAL COLLEGE
12 MAGNIFICO

SM MEGAMALL
6331901 • 6329401
1 DAREDEVIL
2 THEY
3 DAREDEVIL
4 THE EYE
5 ABANDON
6 EL CRIMEN DEL PADRE AMARO
7 AMAZON
8 MAGNIFICO
9 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
10 DAREDEVIL
11 TWO WEEKS NOTICE
12 AB NORMAL COLLEGE

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
9295452
1 THEY
2 TWO WEEKS NOTICE
3 AMAZON
4 AB NORMAL
5 ABANDON
6 DAREDEVIL
7 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
8 DAREDEVIL

SM SOUTHMALL
8066888
1 ABANDON
2 THEY
3 DAREDEVIL
4 THE EYE
5 AB NORMAL COLLEGE
6 DAREDEVIL
7 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
8 DAREDEVIL
9 MAGNIFICO
10 AMAZON

SM CITY CEBU
2313876
1 DAREDEVIL
2 BELOW
3 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
4 BETTER THAN SEX
5 MAGNIFICO
6 AB NORMAL COLLEGE
7 I SPY
8 DAREDEVIL

SM CITY ILOILO
3209422
1 AB NORMAL COLLEGE
2 CLOSED
3 DAREDEVIL
4 BELOW
5 I SPY
6 DAREDEVIL
7 CLOSED
8 MAGNIFICO

SM CITY PAMPANGA
7128015
1 DAREDEVIL
2 DAREDEVIL
3 FEMME FATALE
4 AB NORMAL COLLEGE
5 MAGNIFICO
6 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS

SM SUPER CTR. SUCAT
8294975
1 AB NORMAL COLLEGE
2 DAREDEVIL
3 DAREDEVIL
4 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS

SM CINEMA TUTUBAN
2514302
1 DAREDEVIL
2 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
3 LEGEND OF TOMAGAN
4 AB NORMAL COLLEGE

SM CITY DAVAO
2976998
1 DAREDEVIL
2 BALAT SIBUYAS
3 THEY
4 MAGNIFICO
5 I SPY
6 DAREDEVIL

SM BICUTAN
776-3055
1 DAREDEVIL
2 THEY
3 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
4 DAREDEVIL

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO
859-2884
1 DAREDEVIL
2 MAGNIFICO
3 I SPY
4 DAREDEVIL

THE PODIUM CINEMA
18 ADB Avenue, Ortigas Center, Mandaluyong City
633-8976
1 DAREDEVIL
12:40 FS / 1:10 MF / 3:30 / 5:50 / 8:10 / 10:00 LFS / 10:30 LMF / 12:20 END
2 DAREDEVIL
11:00 MF / 11:20 / 1:40 / 4:00 / 6:20 / 8:40 / 10:30 LFS / 11:00 LMF / 12:50 END

LATE NIGHT SCREENING DURING FRIDAYS AND SATURDAYS
Matinee : P100.00 • Screening until 5pm • Monday thru Friday
Regular Rate : P120.00 • After 5pm • Saturday • Sunday • Holidays (Reserved Seating)

Movies are subject to change without prior notice

MOVIEWORLD CINEMAS
@ Robinsons Malls
call-a-movie: 536- 7812
NOW SHOWING

Galleria
632- 9115- 16
633- 7641 loc. 279
THX DAREDEVIL
10:15 MF, 12:30, 2:45, 5:00, 7:15, 9:30 LMF
2 DAREDEVIL
3 ABANDON
4 AMAZON
5 DAREDEVIL
6 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
7 EL CRIMEN DEL PADRE AMARO
8 TWO WEEKS NOTICE
9 HERO
10 THEY

MATINEE PRICE: P90 THX cinema / P75 level cinemas
Mon.- Fri. / 10am- 4pm (EXCEPT HOLIDAYS)

Ermita
536 -7809- 12
1 DAREDEVIL
2 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
3 THE EYE
4 ABANDON
5 DAREDEVIL
6 AMAZON
7 DAREDEVIL

Metro East - Marcos hway
682- 8193 / 8280
1 THEY
2 DAREDEVIL
3 TWO WEEKS NOTICE
4 HERO
5 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
6 DAREDEVIL
7 TOMAGANS
8 AMAZON

Novaliches
935- 3229 - 30
1 DAREDEVIL
2 DAREDEVIL
3 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
4 TOMAGANS
5 HERO
6 TWO WEEKS NOTICE
7 THEY
8 AMAZON

Malabon Citisquare
288-0985 / 288-2575
1 TOMAGANS
2 DAREDEVIL
3 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
4 AMAZON

Star Mills- Sn. Fernando, Pamp.
875- 1927
961- 5318 / 5270
1 DAREDEVIL
2 TWO WEEKS NOTICE
3 FEMME FATALE
4 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
5 MATAMIS HANGGANG DULO
6 DAREDEVIL

Imus
471- 8188 / 875- 3838
1 DAREDEVIL
2 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
3 AMAZON
4 DAREDEVIL
5 TOMAGANS
6 MAGNIFICO

Sta. Rosa Laguna
049-8370907
1 DAREDEVIL
2 MAGNIFICO
3 SHAGNHAI KNGIHTS
4 TRY SEVENTEEN
5 THEY

Bacolod
441- 0453 / 0459
1 DAREDEVIL
2 TRY SEVENTEEN
3 THEY
4 I SPY
5 BETTER THAN SEX
6 AB NORMAL

Iloilo
336- 8077 - 78
1 DAREDEVIL
2 I SPY
3 MAGNIFICO
4 BELOW
5 8 MILE
6 DAREDEVIL

MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

More dead people and fewer scares

From page A23

Getting frightened is a reflex; you don't need to be warned of an impending shocking image many seconds before you actually see it.

The story also exceeds the limits of the cliché meter. Every other common idea is used: Blind girl is a very gifted musician; it takes forever to convince someone of her supernatural curse; and the psychotherapist falls in love with his patient and supports her quest unflinchingly.

When the duo thinks they've reached a state of closure, the real twist comes in. This time, we're reminded of the necessary misleading plot device used in "Ringu" before its climactic finish.

AYALA CINEMAS

OPENS FEB. 26 EXCLUSIVELY AT

Art Film Greenbelt 1

THE GURU

HEATHER GRAHAM MARISA TOMEI
JIMI MISTRY

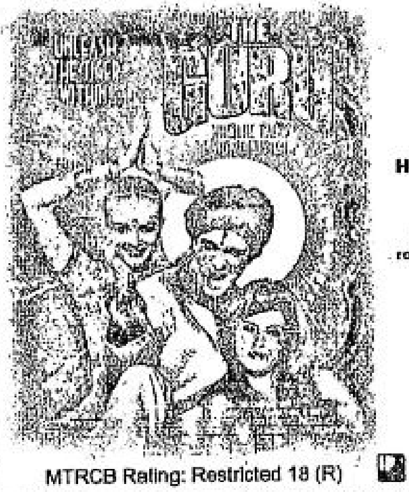
"Stirs together Bollywood and Hollywood, satire and romance, to create an appealing masala dish of a movie."
-- Robert K. Elder, CHICAGO TRIBUNE

"Mistry and co-star Heather Graham lend a fetching naiveté to their characters."
-- Carla Meyer, SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

"THE GURU will leave you grinning from ear to ear."
-- Peter Travers, ROLLING STONE

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

MTRCB Rating: Restricted 18 (R)



AYALA CINEMAS

A LIMITED RETURN ENGAGEMENT
Feb. 19 & 20 only at Glorietta 4.

"TWO THUMBS UP!"
— Ebert & Roeper

"The performances take the movie to a higher level."
— Desson Howe, WASHINGTON POST

Ben Affleck
Matt Damon Chris Moore
present
project greenlight's
STOLEN SUMMER
THE MOVIE

Stolen Summer by writer/director Pete Jones is the winner of the amateur filmmaking competition Project Greenlight. Kevin Pollak, Aidan Quinn, Brian Dennehy & child actor Max Weinberg stars in the story about a Catholic boy & a Jewish boy. When the Jewish boy finds out he's dying, he works with his friends to figure out how he can make sure he gets into heaven.

SKYFILMS

MTRCB Rating: Parental Guidance 13 (PG-13)

POWER PLANT CINEMA

Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41

DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

HERO P13 12:50,3:05,5:20, 7:35,9:50	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS GP 12:10,2:40,5:10, 7:40,10:10	DAREDEVIL P13 11:40,2:10,4:40, 7:10,9:40
ABANDON R18 12:45,2:55,5:05, 7:15,9:30	TWO WEEKS NOTICE P13 12:30,2:45,5:00, 7:15,9:30	DAREDEVIL P13 12:30,3:00,5:30, 8:00,10:30

MATINEE P80.00 - FREE SEATING - SCREENINGS BEFORE 5 PM - MON. TO FRI.

ALL DIGITAL SOUND AYALA CINEMAS NOW SHOWING

G1 GLORIETTA 1	G4 GLORIETTA 4	GB1 GREENBELT 1	GB3 GREENBELT 3	ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER
1 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS	1 DAREDEVIL	1 SWEPT AWAY (EXCLUSIVE) 30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30	THX GUARANTEED SEATS 1 DAREDEVIL 12:35, 3:00, 5:25, 7:50, 10:15	THX 1 DAREDEVIL
2 AMAZON	2 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS	2 DAREDEVIL 11:40, 2:00, 4:20, 6:40, 9:00	THX GUARANTEED SEATS 2 DAREDEVIL 1:45, 4:10, 6:35, 9:00, 11:25	2 DAREDEVIL
3 DAREDEVIL	THX GUARANTEED SEATS 3 DAREDEVIL 11:50, 2:20, 4:50, 7:20, 9:50	OGIE ALCASID: OA SA PUSO Feb. 21, 22, 28 & Mar. 1	GUARANTEED SEATS 3 HERO 1:30, 3:45, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30	3 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
4 DAREDEVIL	4 STOLEN SUMMER (EXCLUSIVE SCREENING)		GUARANTEED SEATS 4 TWO WEEKS NOTICE 1:30, 3:45, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30	4 ABANDON
	5 THE EYE		GUARANTEED SEATS 5 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS 1:30, 4:00, 6:30, 9:00, 11:30	5 TWO WEEKS NOTICE
	6 DAREDEVIL			
	7 ABANDON			

For sreening times, call 729-7777. Movies are subject to change without prior notice. Reserve your seats by texting SURESEATS GB3 or SURESEATS G4 and send to 2333. Or log on to www.sureseats.com for web reservations.

Araneta Center ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

ALI MALL CINEPLEX 7	
Ali 1	AB NORMAL
Ali 2	AMAZON
Ali 3	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
Ali 4	DAREDEVIL
Ali 5	DAREDEVIL
Ali 6	THEY
Ali 7	ABANDON
FARMERS PLAZA CINEMAS	
Farmers 1	TOMAGAN
Farmers 2	DAREDEVIL
ARANETA COLISEUM	
FEB 21 & 22	MARTIN & POPS CONCERT
FEB 23	PBA OPENING GAMES
MARCH 1	JOLINA MANIA CONCERT
ELEPHANT WORLD	
FEB 20	10 AM
FEB 21	10 AM / 3 PM
FEB 22	10 AM / 3 PM / 5 PM

THEATRE MALL GREENHILLS

NOW SHOWING

DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

CINEMA 1	CINEMA 2
DAREDEVIL 11:20, 2:00, 4:35, 7:10, 9:50 P13	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS 11:30, 2:10, 4:45, 7:20, 10:00 GP

TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.
GREENHILLS SHOPPING CENTER, ORTIGAS AVENUE, GREENHILLS, SAN JUAN, METRO MANILA • 7224466

MUSIC MUSEUM
FEB 21-22 & 28, 2003 "MULA SA PUSOD (Pababa)" 9:00 PM
FOR INQUIRIES & RESERVATION, PLS. CALL: 721-6726 OR 721-0635

The Ayala Mall Events

AYALA CENTER
TOWN CENTER
AYALA CENTER CEBU

The Powerpuff Girls LIVE
Saving the World Before Bedtime Musical

MAKATI
Feb 20 6pm
Feb 21 3pm 6pm
Feb 22 & 23 11am, 3pm, 6pm
Glorietta Activity Center

ALABANG
March 7 to 9
11am, 3pm, 6pm
Activity Center

CEBU
Feb 28 4pm, 6:30pm
Mar 1 11am, 3pm, 5:30pm, 7:30pm
Mar 2 11:30am, 3pm, 6pm
Activity Center

CARTOON NETWORK CartoonNetwork.com
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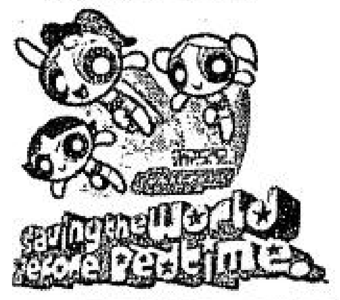
www.ayalaland.com.ph


saving the world before bedtime

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	KAPAG BUMAYO PALAY / UNFAITHFUL CONCUBINE
ODEON	DAREDEVIL
ODEON-2	MALDITA / STRIP SHOW
ROBEN	BUKANG BIBIG
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	HALLOWEEN / ONE WRONG TURN
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	TOMAGAN
CORONET B	CHANGING LANES / THE WILD SIDE
QUEZON-1	BUKANG BIBIG
REMAR	DAREDEVIL
REMAR-2	BUKANG BIBIG
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	AB NORMAL
B	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
CINEMA-2	DAREDEVIL
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	TOMAGAN
CINEMA-2	SUKDULAN
CINEMA-3	MAGNIFICO
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	DAREDEVIL
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	HERO
CINEMA-6	BUKANG BIBIG
CINEMA-7	AB NORMAL COLLEGE
CINEMA-8	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	DEREDEVIL
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	DAREDEVIL
CINEMA-11(SDDS)	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
CINEMA-12	ABANDON
CINEMA-14	AMAZON
CINEMA-15	THEY
LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN	
CINEMA 1	DIE ANOTHER DAY
CINEMA 2	BAHID
CINEMA 3	HARRY POTTER
CINEMA 4	CHANGING LNES
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARAÑAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

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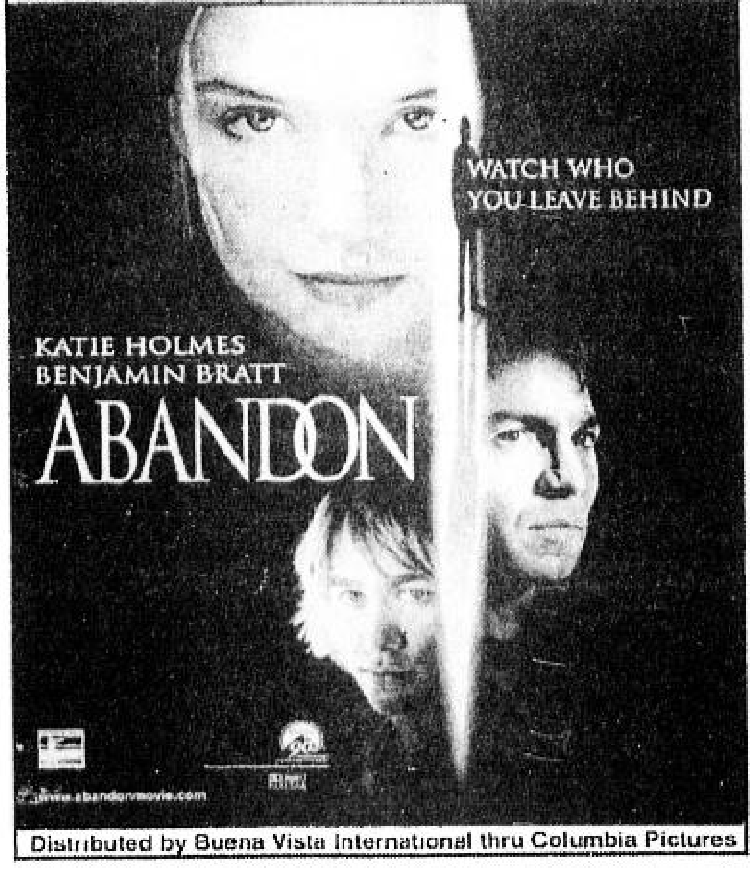

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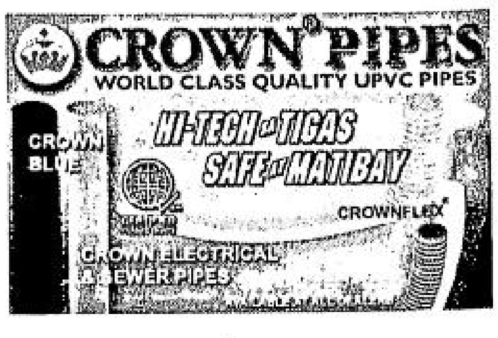


Peso weakens; gov't eyes $500-M loan

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE PESO continued to succumb to pressures from uncertainties linked to money-laundering sanctions and a possible US-led war against Iraq, depreciating to 54.295 to $1 yesterday from 54.20 on Tuesday.

Since the start of the year, the peso had been the worst performer among 15 currencies in Asia as it had shed 15.3 percent of its value. Yesterday alone, the peso was the second-worst performer next to New Zealand's dollar.

Bangko Sentral Governor Rafael Buenaventura insisted that the peso's weakness was only temporary, triggered in part by the unresolved issues related to the country's failure to meet international standards against money laundering and the impending economic sanctions starting March 15.

"As we address the problems particularly those related to money laundering, we believe some of the pressures on the peso would ease," said the BSP chief.

The peso hit a low of 54.30 to $1 before closing a notch higher in the spot market yesterday where volume slipped to $96.5 million from $117.5 million on Tuesday.

Meantime, the Bangko Sentral has tapped seven investment banks in raising a $500-million loan to refinance a three-year debt maturing in April.

The loan syndicate included Citibank N.A., Credit Lyonnais First Boston, HSBC, International Commercial Bank of China, Mizuho Bank Ltd., Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corp. and Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi Ltd.

BSP Deputy Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said the spread on the five-year loan was set at 2.33 percentage points over the six-month London interbank offered rate of 1.34 percent.

Tetangco said the interest rate the BSP would pay for the loan was favorable considering uncertainties gripping the financial markets. A spread represents the premium investors seek to compensate for increased risks in placing funds in an emerging market like the Philippines.

The BSP has another $200 million worth of maturing loan in September. Tetangco said there were no plans yet on how to settle this borrowing.

The loan the BSP would refinance in April 20 was one of the cheapest it had obtained.

The three-year, $500-million loan handled by ABN-Amro in April 2000 carried a spread of 1.19 percentage points over six-month Libor. During that time, the spread on national government borrowings of similar tenor would be about two percentage points over a benchmark rate.

The central bank normally borrows to boost the country's external payments position which, in effect, helps build up dollar reserves especially when the local currency is experiencing some weakness.

The bank also uses it dollar reserves to intervene in the market and strengthen the peso.

Calpers defers action on RP, picks 14 emerging marts

THE CALIFORNIA Public Employees Retirement System (Calpers) has decided to keep its presence in the local equities market pending a 60-day review of the Philippines' potential as a continuing investment destination.

Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho met with the directors of Calpers during its board meeting on Tuesday to convince the biggest pension fund in the United States not to heed the advise of Wilshire Consulting to drop the Philippines from its investment portfolio.

"I was assured that they will keep the Philippines on their list. We were given 60 days to present a comprehensive report on why they should stay. We will include items that Wilshire may have missed," Camacho said.

A Reuters dispatch from Sacramento, California, said the Calpers board listened with interest to a presentation from Camacho in which he argued that the country deserved better marks in areas such as investor protection, political stability and judicial reform.

It said the debate over how to deal with the Philippines dominated much of the discussion, with some Calpers board members accusing Wilshire of making a prejudiced ruling against the Southeast Asian nation.

The report added the fund, which has about $1.8 billion in emerging markets and can set the tone for other institutional investors, said it would keep the Philippines on its target investment list after Camacho appealed a recommendation that it be dropped.

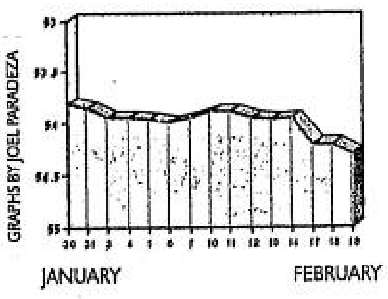
Cora Guidote, executive director of the Investor Relations Office, said Camacho had formed a committee that would reexamine the findings of Wilshire and prepare the comprehensive report within the 60-day period from the Feb. 18 Calpers board meeting.

Guidote said Wilshire Consult-

CALPERS/ B2

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P54.295 = $1

As of 5 p.m., Feb. 19, 2003

¥119.03 = $1

As of 5 p.m., Feb. 19, 2003

GOLD: $344.50-345.00

per ounce Hong Kong, Feb.19, 2003

STOCK MARKET

Shares end down

SHARES ended lower yesterday, weighed down by the specter of a US-led war on Iraq and the government's continuing failure to meet global standards against money laundering, traders said.

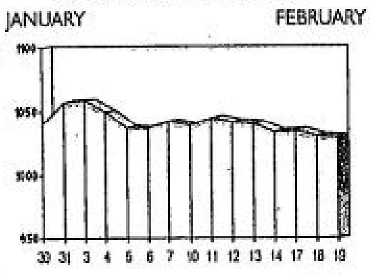
News earlier yesterday that the largest pension fund in the United States will not pull out its investments in the country failed to whet appetites for stocks, traders said.

The 30-company PSE Index closed with a 1.34-point, or 0.1 percent, loss at 1,029.30, adding to Tuesday's 0.4 percent fall.

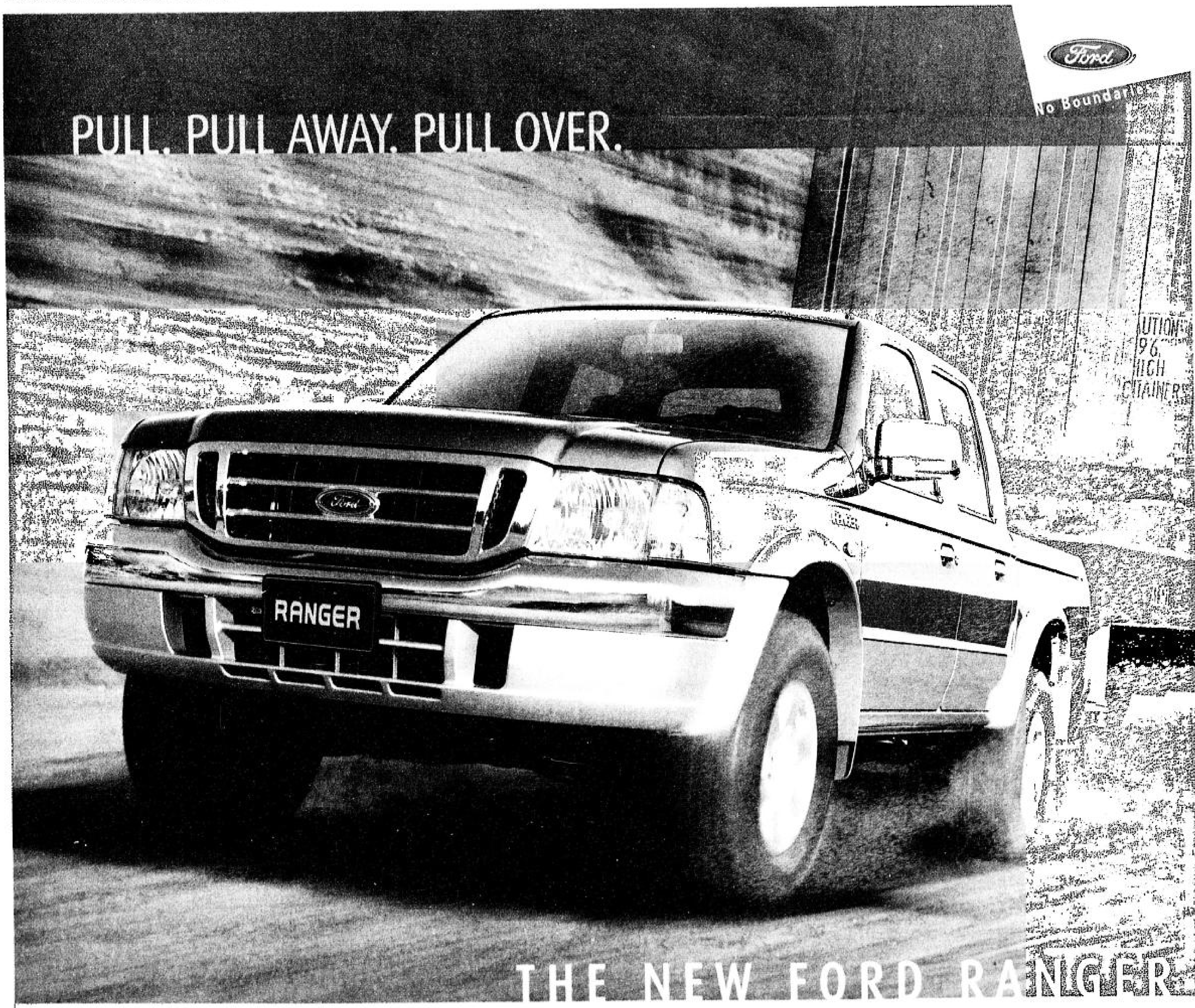
Blue chip PLDT was among the most actively traded stocks, falling P2.50, or 0.8 percent, to P295 in step with a 1.4-percent decline in the company's American Depositary Receipts on Tuesday.

"Everyone seems to have accepted the fact that there's very little that foreigners still hold in the Philippines, therefore there's not much downside," BNP Paribas Peregrine Securities research head Edgar Bancod said. "The common question asked now is where's the upside? Unfortunately there's not much you can say at this point." *AP*

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2)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Let me discount the ways

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

NOT too long ago, perhaps one bright sunny day, Energy Secretary Vincent "the Silent" Perez decided he wanted to take a short trip to the United Kingdom.

Now, I cannot say whether he spent his own money for the trip. I only know that, as a Cabinet member, he could charge taxpayers for it.

His was an official trip, an important "mission", if you will, because Vincent the Silent was going to convince a UK company to come back to the Philippines.

That was the National Grid of the UK, owner and operator of the transmission lines in that country. It ran away from the Philippines rather fast, of course, and in disgust.

***

THIS cute administration of Gloriaetta, as you know, is dying to privatize the problematic Napocor, together with its spin-off transmission firm called Transco.

National Grid is that company that, to monitor every step of the process of the Napocor privatization, even set up an office here, manned permanently by an expat.

Its man in Manila attended every forum, every congressional hearing and every meeting that had anything to do with the Napocor privatization.

National Grid, in other words, was dead serious about bidding for Transco. In its listening post here, it even tried to tune in to whispers in the coffee shops of Manila.

***

LAST year, all of a sudden, National Grid closed down its Manila office. Vincent the Silent thought it was his patriotic duty to follow them all the way to the UK.

But everybody knew why National Grid left in a hurry. At that time, politicos were demonizing the IPPs. Also, the Supreme Court was picking on Meralco.

The UK firm probably went through the greatest fear of its life. This was the company for which Vincent the Silent might or might not have spent his own money.

He would try to convince the disappointed National Grid to come back, even if all the reasons for its leaving, in the first place, were still very much around. Superb!

***

STYLING himself as a reformist and being one of the few Wall Street types in the Cabinet, Vincent the Silent naturally failed in his apparent all-expense-paid mission.

What are the reforms we have so far in the energy sector? Let me discount the ways. For one, Vincent the Silent is bidding out new coal supply contracts.

Sen. John Osmeña once said energy officials would fight fiercely to keep the coal plants because certain people made a lot of money from the coal supply contracts.

Now, the country has so much power generation capacity, environmental groups are on their knees, begging Vincent the Silent to shut down the deadly coal plants.

***

HE will not have any of that BS! On the contrary, apparently to oblige the coal suppliers, he is reducing the use of natural gas from the multibillion-peso Malampaya.

After all, under the contract between the government and the Malampaya consortium, whether or not we use the natural gas, we have to pay for it.

Never mind that natural gas is the cleanest form of energy. Vincent the Silent cannot bother to care about our lungs. We are poor. We cannot afford to live long.

It's just that, with his kind of "reforms", no wonder, we can never hope to reduce the stupid PPA. Thank you, bossing! Next time, the trip will be on us again!

***

HERE is another one to make your day: Local car assemblers "and/or" importers are asking this cute administration for subsidy on their export of finished vehicles.

With the nerve of these people, which they just love to show us as they threaten the government each time they want something, you can bet they will get the subsidy.

I am sure that the news should make your day because it made mine yesterday when I had the misfortune of reading an item quoting one Henry Co of Ford Philippines.

That is the same company that the Bureau of Customs accused of cheating the government of some P500 million in taxes. This is not subsidy enough, for sure!

***

IF I remember correctly, more than three decades ago, we gave away tons of incentives under a car-making program because we wanted to make our very own car someday.

Today, more than 35 years later, we are still giving away tons of tax breaks to some pseudo car makers, and we are still longing for our very own car someday.

Nobody can say why this cute administration is bending over backwards to please fake car makers, and I cannot say if the reason is actually their scare tactics.

They simply throw a tantrum, threatening to shut down their factories, and—voila—the government gives in to their demand. This, in our barangay, is called blackmail.

***

BUT in the dignified business of lobbying for government largesse, it is simply known as hard-balling. You can guess who always wins.

When the car companies threw a big tantrum, for instance, Trade Secretary Mar Roxas worked on shutting down used car importation in Subic.

We can no longer buy imported, used SUVs and small trucks, although they are more affordable than the similarly IMPORTED trucks and SUVs of the car companies.

Upon their simple say-so, at least based on SBMA estimates, some 10,000 people lost their jobs in Subic. Maybe the car companies will hire them. Well, someday!

***

BECAUSE of a yawning budget deficit, the Department of Finance also wanted to reduce the tax breaks given to various industries, among them the bogus car-making sector.

But the BOI, which was also under Mar, fought for the tons of tax incentives that our government gave to the alleged car-making industry more than 35 years ago.

They are still an infant industry, according to the endorsement from the BOI, having enjoyed the protection of government diapers for only three decades.

What is this, *kabayong buntis*, if it's not too much pampering of a sector that, even before it could grow out of infancy, has become senile.

***

ALSO for the first time, under Finance Secretary Jose Isidro "the Whiz" Camacho, the DOF harped on the loopholes in the vehicle tax system.

As I always say, loopholes are nothing but legal ways to cheat, a 100-percent oxymoron, if there is one, because how can there be such a thing as "legal cheating."

The car companies used all their might to lobby for a congressional action on the loopholes. As expected, the government gave way.

The car assemblers "and/or" importers again simply threatened to close shop if the government would not allow them to continue cheating on tax payments.

***

AND here comes this certain Henry Co of Ford Philippines, saying that the government must subsidize those very same companies.

Let me see if I got this right—so the car companies, despite all the tax breaks, want to go on cheating on the same tax payments, so that they we can continue to operate here and, thus, get paid by the government for doing so. Is that it?

All right,-we give up. You win again. Go ahead, it's yours, take the whole country.

Dispute over Pavilion surfaces

By Doris C. Dumlao

ACESITE Ltd. is protesting Waterfront Philippines Inc.'s acquisition of a controlling stake in its local unit, Acesite (Philippines) Hotel Corp., owner of the Manila Pavilion Hotel.

As far as Waterfront is concerned, however, its acquisition of a 75.6-percent stake in Acesite Philippines is a done deal, as shares have already been transferred under its name through a cross sale in the Philippine Stock Exchange on Monday.

When the Gatchalian family announced that it purchased a controlling stake in Acesite Philippines on Tuesday, it was presumed that the shares were bought from Acesite Ltd.

Yesterday, however, Acesite director Francis Lam said Waterfront's claims of its takeover of Acesite Philippines were "unfounded" and "erroneous."

Lam said Acesite did not sell its 74.89 million shares in its Philippine unit, stressing that Waterfront's takeover was null and void.

"We have instructed our lawyers to conduct the necessary filings in the appropriate venues to protect our rights," Lam said.

Waterfront clarified yesterday that it acquired the shares not from Acesite but from Equitable PCI Bank Inc., which foreclosed on shares used as collateral on a loan obtained by Acesite Philippines years ago.

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NEWS BRIEFS

War to dampen growth

PHILIPPINE growth will slow down to 3.7 to 4.2 percent this year from last year's five-year high of 4.6 percent if war breaks out in the Middle East, according to economists at the Ateneo de Manila University.

"There's a lot of concern with the US-Iraq war," former Economic Planning Secretary and Ateneo research director Cielito Habito said.

Habito said the Middle East crisis was already leading to higher oil prices and weakening of the peso.

"It will also lead to an export slowdown because of lower demand from most of the trade partners. It will also lead to sluggish investments," Habito said. ***Doris C. Dumlao***

Accounting standards

THE PROFESSIONAL Regulation Commission and the Accounting Standards Council have submitted to the Securities and Exchange Commission six statements of financial accounting standards to be adopted effective this year.

The six standards cover the deferral of foreign exchange differences, events after the balance sheet date, accounting for government grants and disclosure of government assistance, business combinations, provisions, contingent liabilities and contingent assets, and intangible assets. ***Michelle V. Remo***

East West profits up 300%

EAST West Bank, a regular commercial bank owned by the Gotianun family, posted a nearly 300-percent increase in profit last year to P155 million.

East West Bank president and chief operating officer Elrey Ramos said profits grew because the bank's resource base had expanded by 30 percent in the past two years. ***Elena R. Torrijos***

10 more PBCom branches

PHILIPPINE Bank of Communications said yesterday it would acquire 10 branches from two to three other banks this quarter.

PBCom president Isidro Alcantara told reporters Tuesday evening that the soon-to-be-finalized acquisition of the 10 branches was part of the bank's overall plan to expand its 68-branch network by an additional 20 branches this year.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of Wednesday, February 19, 2003)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	16.25	16.25	16	16	22,700
Bank of the Phil. Islands	33	33	32.5	33	237,600
Citystate Savings Bank	14.75	14.75	14.75	14.75	2,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	24.5	24.5	24.5	24.5	65,200
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	28.5	28.5	28.5	28.5	31,800
Philippine National Bank	26	26	25.5	25.5	5,000
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	9.5	9.5	9.5	9.5	3,000
Security Bank Corp.	10	10	10	10	9,000
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Bankard Inc.	0.74	0.74	0.73	0.73	180,000
Filipino Fund Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	50,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1300	1300	1300	1300	710
Sun Life Financial Serv.	965	965	960	960	2,800
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	11.75	12	11.75	12	20,000
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.38	0.41	0.38	0.4	1,950,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	530	535	530	535	9,190
ISM Communications Corp.	0.015	0.015	0.013	0.015	700,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	10,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	295	295	292.5	295	46,940
Philweb Corp.	0.01	0.011	0.01	0.011	9,000,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. B	12.5	12.75	12.25	12.25	570,800
Petron Corp.	1.68	1.7	1.68	1.7	1,289,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1	1	1	1	920,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.52	1.52	1.52	1.52	10,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.4	2.4	2.38	2.38	2,080,000
Negros Navigation Co. Inc.	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	40,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Phil Nat'l Const. Corp.	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	30,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Jollibee Foods Corp.	16.5	16.5	16.5	16.5	12,600
RFM Corp.	0.69	0.69	0.69	0.69	100,000
San Miguel Corp. A	58	58	57.5	58	49,800
San Miguel Corp. B	65.5	65.5	64.5	65.5	415,400
Vitarich Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	100,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	4.25	4.25	4.15	4.15	830,000
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	600,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	2.34	2.34	2.32	2.32	1,017,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	5,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	10	10	10	10	2,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	1,900,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.019	0.019	0.019	0.019	100,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	680,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.14	1.14	1.14	1.14	20,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	8.4	8.4	8.4	8.4	33,000
J.G. Summit Holdings, Inc.	1.16	1.16	1.12	1.12	252,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.57	0.57	0.57	0.57	1,140,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	200,000
Music Corp.	0.17	0.175	0.17	0.175	1,320,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	490,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Metro Alliance Holdings	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	20,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.72	0.72	0.72	0.72	100,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	14.5	14.75	14.5	14.75	4,800
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	12	12	11.75	12	276,900
Jollibee Warrants	16	16	16	16	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10	10	10	10	1,000
PLDT 10% Pref Series Bb	10	10	10	10	1,200
Philweb Corp. - Warrants	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.002	6,000,000
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	6.8	6.8	6.8	6.8	5,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	4.75	4.75	4.7	4.7	1,025,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	80,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	0.92	0.92	0.9	0.9	2,220,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	1.22	1.22	1.22	1.22	2,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	5.4	5.4	5.3	5.4	3,941,000
MINING					
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	940,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.205	0.21	0.205	0.21	2,100,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.26	0.27	0.26	0.27	150,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	400,000
OIL					
Sinophil Corp.	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	800,000

	SHARES	VALUE(P)
Bank & Fin Svc	609,610	14,741,200.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	32,352,730	76,901,140.00
PRO	7,268,000	28,134,890.00
Mining	3,590,000	771,500.00
OIL	800,000	16,000.00
GRAND TOTALS :	44,620,340	120,564,730.00
	AVERAGES	
Bank & Fin Svc	353.27	DOWN 1.05
Comm'l & Ind'l	1,487.14	UP 2.34
PRO	449.62	DOWN 5.29
Mining	1,193.86	UP 25.79
OIL	1.06	UNCH 0.00
All Shares Index	640.44	DOWN 0.45
Composite	1,029.30	DOWN 1.34

NO. OF ADVANCES: 13; NO. OF DECLINES: 17; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 36; NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 66; NO. OF TRADES: 739

DISCLOSURES

ELECTED officers of **Philippine Tobacco Flue-Curing and Redrying Corp.** were Bienvenido Tan Jr., chair; Carlos Dominguez, president; Ignacio Luis Tan, vice president; Patricia Bunye, corporate secretary; and Bienvenido Tan III, treasurer. Also, the company will distribute a portion of its unrestricted earnings in the amount of P35 million as cash dividends in favor of stockholders as of Feb. 27.

***

SOUTH China Resources Inc. has completed its application for a non-exclusive geophysical permit east of Palawan.

***

GLOBAL Business Holdings Inc. has reduced its authorized capital stock to P1 billion. Edita Cruz-Encarnacion was appointed compliance officer. Also, the company will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on April 29 with record date on March 4.

***

AYALA Corp. has disclosed that its subsidiary, **AC International Finance Ltd.**, has signed a $200-million eurobond issue with **JP Morgan** as the sole lead manager and bookrunner. The bond has a coupon of 8.125 percent and will mature on Feb. 21, 2008.

***

MAKATI Finance Corp. has moved its annual stockholders' meeting from March to any day in June. The meeting was postponed because its financial statements are still being examined by external auditors.

***

MBf Inc. has disclosed that its independent director is Cristina Samson.

Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research

CURRENCIES

February 19, 2003 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	0.935454	1.000000	54.153000
Japan	Yen	0.007861	0.008403	0.455000
United Kingdom	Pound	1.488213	1.590900	86.152000
Hongkong	Dollar	0.119941	0.128217	6.943300
Switzerland	Franc	0.679688	0.726586	39.346800
Canada	Dollar	0.616769	0.659326	35.704500
Singapore	Dollar	0.534545	0.571429	30.944600
Australia	Dollar	0.553326	0.591506	32.031800
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.481375	2.652590	143.645700
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.249468	0.266681	14.441600
Brunei	Dollar	0.533022	0.569801	30.856400
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000106	0.000113	0.006100
Thailand	Baht	0.021745	0.023245	1.258800
UAE	Dirham	0.254718	0.272294	14.745500
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.069000	57.889600
Argentina	Peso	0.296969	0.317460	17.191400
Brazil	REAL	0.260427	0.278396	15.076000
Denmark	Kroner	0.134543	0.143827	7.788700
India	Rupee	0.019631	0.020986	1.136500
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.246205	0.263193	14.252700
Mexico	New Peso	0.086600	0.092575	5.013200
New Zealand	Dollar	0.514976	0.550509	29.811700
Norway	Kroner	0.132873	0.142041	7.691900
Pakistan	Rupee	0.016240	0.017361	0.940200
South Africa	Rand	0.111661	0.119366	6.464000
Korea	Won	0.000784	0.000838	0.045400
Sweden	Kroner	0.109631	0.117196	6.346500
Syria	Pound	0.022273	0.023810	1.289400
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.027028	0.028893	1.564600
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000587	0.000627	0.034000

Calpers defers action . . .

From page B1

ing had lapses in its findings particularly in the areas of transaction cost, transparency, and labor practices. Camacho said Wilshire also erred in its evaluation of political stability and civil liberties.

The Calpers board on Tuesday ruled out investing in some of the world's largest countries, including China, India, Indonesia and Russia and dealt a blow to stock markets in Malaysia and Thailand. Also banned for investment were Morocco, Sri Lanka, Egypt, Pakistan, Colombia and Venezuela.

Under the revised standards, investment was cleared for 14 emerging markets, including South Korea, Poland and Israel. The others are the Czech Republic, Hungary, Taiwan, South Africa, Chile, Mexico, Jordan, Peru, Argentina, Turkey and Brazil.

Import growth outpaced export expansion in '02

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINES posted a merchandise trade surplus of $1.59 billion in 2002, 38.7 percent lower than the previous year's level as the growth in imports outpaced that of exports.

The figures reported by the National Statistics Office yesterday, however, had yet to take into account the revisions needed to correct the overstated import levels.

For the month of December alone, the NSO said expenditures for imported goods moved up by 19.8 percent to $2.56 billion from the previous year's level.

Electronics and components accounted for 24.4 percent of the total import bill, rising by 58.4 percent from the year-ago level.

Purchases of office and electronic data processing machines ranked second with a 10.3-percent share in the import bill, 34 percent up from the 2001 level.

Other top imports last year were mineral fuels, lubricants and related materials, for which payments rose by 9.5 percent, while imports of telecommunication equipment and electrical machinery dropped by 9.9 percent.

Capital goods comprised 42.8 percent of the total bill in December while the amount paid for these products went up by 21.5 percent from year-ago level.

Payments for raw materials and intermediate goods likewise rose by 20.6 percent, accounting for 37.3 percent of the total bill.

For the January to December period, total imports grew by 13.3 percent to $33.47 billion while export receipts went up by 9.1 percent to hit $35.07 billion.

ATR Kim Eng Securities economist Luz Lorenzo said the import growth rate of 19.8 percent for December and 13.3 percent for the whole of 2002 were likely overstated. As such, she said the 2002 trade surplus might be scaled down after the revisions were completed.

The NSO earlier admitted a substantial reduction in import value for 2001 and 2002 but the revisions on a monthly basis have not been finalized.

"Since most of the import under-reporting is occurring in the electronics industry, the major categories to be affected are raw materials and intermediate goods and capital goods," Lorenzo said.

"Given all indications thus far, we expect that when the révisions are completed, imports would have grown minimally in 2002 compared with the 13.3-percent estimate, although the trade surplus may stay in the same level," he said.

FEB MITSUI MARINE INSURANCE CO., INC.
SYNOPSIS OF ANNUAL STATEMENT
As of December 31, 2000

ADMITTED ASSETS		
Bonds	₱	366,387,105.65
Treasury Bills		104,834,000.00
Stocks		9,562,199.75
Other Investments		24,316,478.46
Security Fund		20,789.00
Cash in Office and in Banks		106,776,873.24
Premiums Receivable		166,629,656.28
Premium Due From Ceding Companies		55,611,164.95
Funds Held by Ceding Companies		73,738.94
Reinsurance Recoverable on Losses		260,357,625.40
Loss Reserve Held by Reinsurers		71,968.41
Accrued Investment Income		30,656.69
EDP Equipment		8,335,287.15
Total Admitted Assets	₱	1,103,007,543.92
LIABILITIES		
Losses & Claims Payable	₱	253,525,555.94
Reserve for Unearned Premiums		100,134,725.64
Premiums Due to Reinsurers		171,546,757.44
Funds Held for Reinsurers		69,608,066.66
Catastrophe Loss Reserve		3,015,549.77
Taxes Payable		61,508,973.58
Accrued Expenses Payable		15,995,145.69
Accounts Payable		587,461.02
Unearned Bond Discount		9,026,042.37
Other Liabilities		155,927,156.24
Total Liabilities	₱	840,875,434.35
STOCKHOLDER'S EQUITY		
Capital Stock Paid-Up	₱	150,000,000.00
Contributed Surplus		100,000,000.00
Fluctuation Reserve - Forex		3,030,462.79
Retained Earnings		9,101,646.78
Total Stockholder's Equity	₱	262,132,109.57
Total Liabilities and Stockholder's Equity	₱	1,103,007,543.92

(This synopsis prepared from the 2000 Annual Statement, approved by the Insurance Commission is published pursuant to Section 225 of the Insurance Code of 1978, as amended.)

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   - Farm location/vicinity map
   - Articles of Incorporation (for corporations/cooperatives)
   - List of proponents
   - Farm facilities/improvements
2. Processors/suppliers of glutenmeal/corn bran/corn starch/sugar/soy meal/copra cake. Applicants should indicate the commodities they process/supply, and submit their plant layout, capacity and tolling rates.
3. Transport contractors for the above raw materials (truckers/bargers/trampers/shippers). Applications should include the number of service providers' units and make of vehicles, route of operations and service rates.

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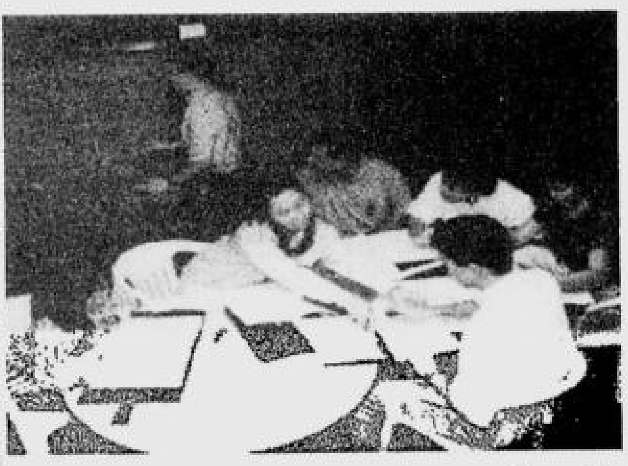

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☐ 4th Project and Procurement Management Course, September 10-19, 2003

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E-mail: epimentel@dataserve.aim.edu.ph
123 Paseo de Roxas, 1260 Makati City, Philippines MCPO Box 2095, Makati City, Philippines

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MWSS 125 Taon'g Anibersaryo: Patuloy sa Matibay at Epektibong Paglilingkod sa Mamamayan

Congratulations to

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Reaping our bounty from the countryside

There's a reason to celebrate a season of abundance in our countryside. So, we packaged the products of the small provincial pasalubong producers (PPPs), who are mostly small and micro entrepreneurs while some are our farmers' cooperatives, from all the 15 regions nationwide. We made them into beautiful baskets of goodies --- that we gave away as tokens to our valued clients and countryside partners. These baskets of harvest, as we call them, are fitting symbols of the inexhaustible riches of our countryside and our unceasing effort to assist them improve their socio-economic status through timely technical and financial support.

This is our small way of giving thanks and honor to our development partners and priority clients who continue to be productive and generate employment in the countryside.

We at LANDBANK believe in harnessing more economic activities in the countryside, as we continue to make a pitch for support for these micro and small enterpreneurs to various government agencies and the private sector in strengthening their technical and marketing links.

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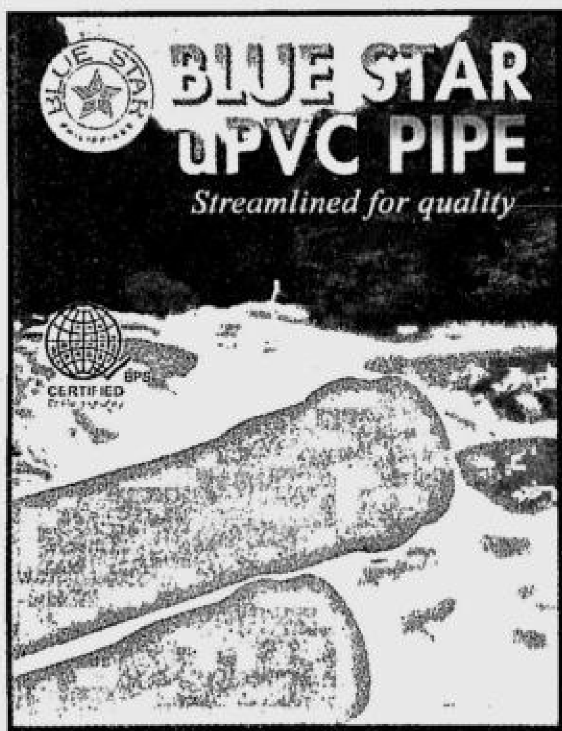

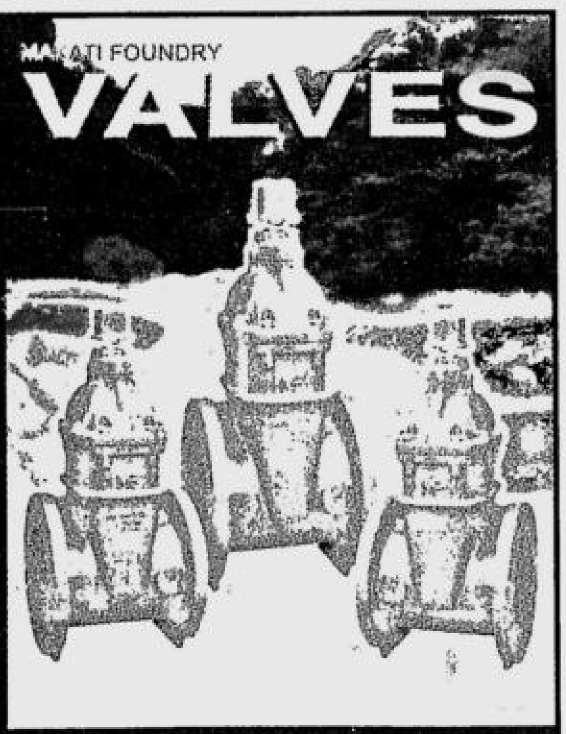

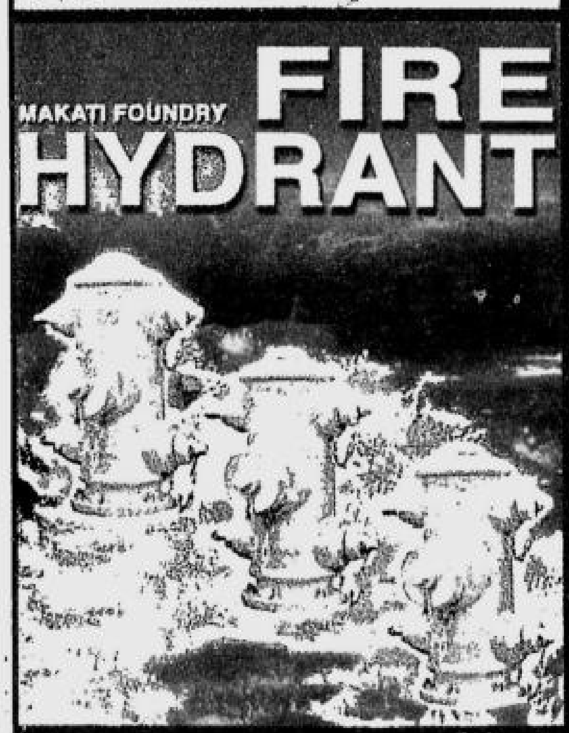

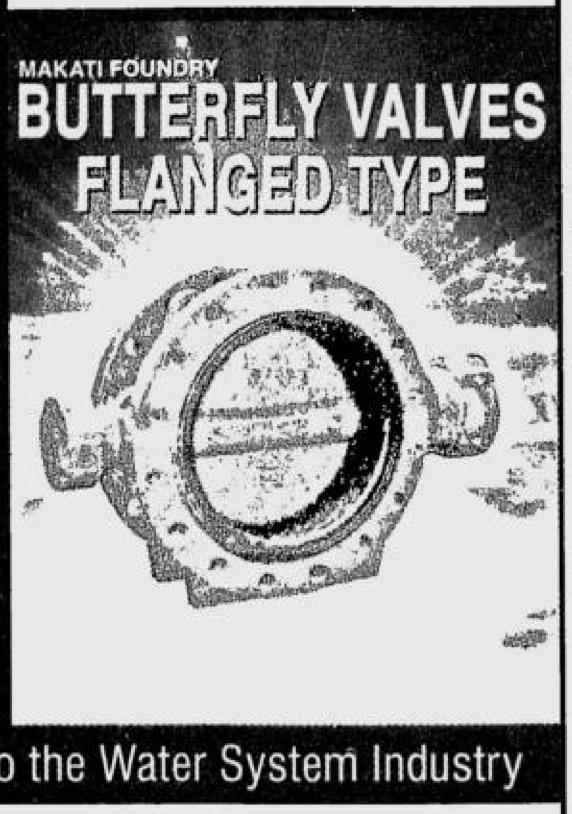

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Water is Life

By: Arkhon A. Antolin

Water is the most precious commodity on earth and yet it can be had for free – or for a very minimal cost, in the case of tap water in the country.

This most basic necessity, as politicians or economists would call it, is not simply just a need. It is life itself. Water sustains life. Its disappearance will mean the disappearance of man, or life, on earth.

Space scientists always try to find presence of water in other planets. The presence of water, past or present, means life existed, or can exist, in such a planet. Many scientists say it is possible to find another planet with a similar atmosphere as that of the earth's. However, water is still the catalyst to start or sustain life.

The most relevant fact today is that man needs to sustain life in this age of globalization, population explosion and, eventually, pollution. Sadly, the environment, particularly water resources, is always the first casualty of growth and progress. Thus, the immediate need for protection of water resources.

Filipino hydrologists fear that the country will inevitably experience a severe water shortage in 2030 if the deforestation of watersheds and contamination of surface water continues.

Water is so valuable that a person needs to drink about 8- 10 glasses of water everyday to enable his system to function normally. It helps cleanse the body, assists in food digestion and absorption of nutrients, and facilitates excretion of wastes.

The capacity of water to store heat helps living things survive rapid temperature changes. The amount of heat generated by a man during a day's activity is enough to raise his body temperature by as much as 300° F.

Economically, water is needed to run industries, the engine of any country's progress. The availability of clean water is essential in putting up industries that generate employment.

Water is also vital to food production for irrigation, fish farming and livestock-raising. A polluted water source, or lack of clean water, would adversely affect the country's food supply. Lakes, rivers, seas and oceans are major sources of man's sustenance.

Water is an integral part even in the production of medicine. Many drugs are water-based, or require water to extract or process necessary ingredients.

Even in the protection of our properties, water is an agent being used by firefighters to stop fire and save our buildings, houses, valuables and even our lives.

Water is really so precious that we have to conserve and preserve it. You have to love it because loving it means loving yourself, your life.

MWSS-Administrator
ORLANDO C. HONDRADE

President
GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO

DPWH Secretary
MMDA, MWSS Chairman
BAYANI F. FERNANDO

The MWSS: 125 Years of Dedicated Service

The Manila Water Supply System has the distinction of being "the Grand Old Man" of all water systems in Asia. Constructed in 1878 at a cost of P745,509, which came from the investment proceeds of the P10,000 donation of Don Francisco Carriedo y Peredo, a Spanish philanthropist, it was completed in 1882 and, subsequently, started delivering 16 million liters of water per day (MLD) to 300,000 people.

Birth and Growth

The present Metropolitan Waterworks & Sewerage System (MWSS) was created in mid-1971 with the dissolution of the NWSA to serve the water and sewerage needs of the National Capital Region (NCR), Rizal Province, and Cavite. Its first major task was to plan out and implement a system capacity improvement program to fully utilize the Angat-Ipo River sources. Consistent with the said goal, the MWSS was able to deliver 2,700 million liters per day (MLD) to about 8 million Filipinos by 1994.

In 1995, by virtue of Republic Act 8041, the privatization of the MWSS was undertaken in what was considered as the world's biggest privatization of a waterworks system. In August 1, 1997, the West concession area was turned over to Maynilad Water Services and the East concession area was passed on to the Manila Water Co. Under a privatized set-up, the MWSS now (1) oversees the distribution of water; (2) initiates the development and implementation of new water sources projects; (3) ensures the good quality of water; and (4) develops, protects and manages its watershed areas.

Overcoming Hurdles

Ninety-seven percent (97%) of Metro Manila's water supply comes from the Angat Dam. This current dependence on a single source, Angat water, is not an ideal scenario. The current water production capacity from existing raw water supply sources is about 4,000 MLD, which is 300 MLD short of the estimated total water demand for 2002 of 4,300 MLD. To meet the shortfall and expected increase in water demand, MWSS has identified potential sources/alternatives for interim and long-term raw water supply development. Several studies of MWSS to identify raw water supply sources are ongoing with the assistance of external support agencies such as JICA and ADB. MWSS is also pursuing parallel efforts to tap the private sector in the development of interim raw water supply sources to address the supply gap at the soonest possible time. (*See fig. 1*)

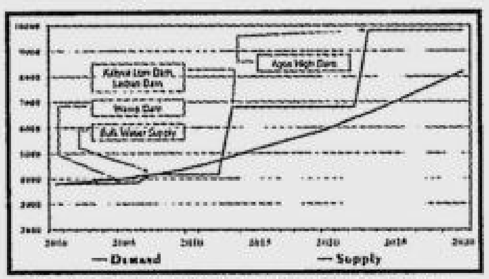


Fig. 1 Road Map with Demand & Supply Curve

	Potential Yield (MLD)	Estimated Project Cost (US$)	Earliest Commissioning Date
Wawa Dam	50	14M	2005
Bulk Water Supply Project	300	93M	2007
Laiban Dam	1800	700M	2013
Agos Dam	3000		
Phase 1		1,100M	2023
Phase 2		650M	2025

Fig. 2 Water Supply Projects

In order to meet forecast demand, the MWSS has outlined a program for developing new water sources: (*See fig. 2*)

Water from the additional water sources will not only ensure improved and sustainable service delivery for existing customers, but also enable extension of service coverage, particularly to the urban poor.

The El Niño episodes of the past years have shown the quality and efficiency of the relationships between the private companies and the government in facing an unexpected and very difficult situation. It also showed very satisfactorily how technical management has been honed in responding to contingency planning on critical concerns.

There has been vast improvement in service in terms of percentage of customers with 24-hours a day, 7-days a week water. Today, water supply availability averages 21 hours daily, a vast improvement of 3 hours from 17 hours in 1997.

Equally important, water service connections recorded a 5% increase, from 996,226 in 2001 to 1,048,142 last year. This means an actual coverage of 92%, exceeding the 2002 target by 2%.

Two Arms, One Body

The MWSS is comprised of 2 offices: the Corporate Office, which is under the dynamic leadership of Engr. Orlando C. Hondrade as Administrator, and the Regulatory Office, headed by its dedicated Chief Regulator & Senior Deputy Administrator, Engr. Eduardo C. Santos. The Corporate Office is tasked with the management of the retained assets of MWSS, monitoring the utilization of existing loans, and oversees the development and implementation of new water sources. On the other hand, it is the duty of the Regulatory Office to oversee the performance of the concessionaires, enforce standards of service and effective complaint resolution, and determine acceptable water rates.

While these two offices have different functions, they are both committed to the realization of one goal: to efficiently provide the people with adequate supply of potable water and sanitary sewerage services at fair and affordable rates, in a manner that ensures the conservation of the environment and the viability of the System as a world-class model water supply and sewerage facility.

Still Committed to its Mission

As proof of MWSS' commitment to ensure good quality and adequate water supply, the agency, together with multi-sectoral organizations, continuously pursues the **development, protection and active management of its watershed, dam and filtration areas**. Taking steps to achieve this goal, the MWSS stands as one of the primemovers in projects like the: (a) Balara Nursery under the Billion Trees Movement; (b) La Mesa Dam Watershed Protection under the Save the La Mesa Watershed by ABS-CBN Bantay Kalikasan; (c) Balara Community Development Plan.

Just recently, the agency undertook the remedial repair works on Aqueduct No.5 (AQ #5), the biggest existing aqueduct that conveys raw water from Angat reservoir to Ipo Dam. AQ #5, located at Norzagaray, Bulacan, conveys 2,000 MLD of raw water, or half of the 4,000 MLD total water supply, to the Balara and La Mesa Treatment Plants. Though major rehabilitation works have yet to be undertaken, its structural condition prevents further work. Estimated raw water saved as a result of the repair works is more than 120 MLD, equivalent to the supply of 90,000 households in Metro Manila.

To ensure continuous water supply meantime that the other aqueducts are being maintained, the MWSS, under a combination of BOT and foreign financing facility, is preparing for the implementation of the construction of a new aqueduct, denominated as Bicti-Novaliches Aqueduct #6 (BNAQ #6). BNAQ #6 will serve as the by-pass line and a substitute conveyance system for programmed repair works for the other four (4) major aqueduct systems.

As a manifestation of the agency's social awareness and commitment to the Administration's thrust on socialized housing, the MWSS has made the dreams of over 2,000 families nearer reality by agreeing to sell to bonafide residents of Daang Tubo, Montalban the lots they occupy. It has also launched the restoration and preservation of the Balara recreational facilities, which was once a famous tourist spot, to its 1940s glory. This affirms the MWSS' conviction to provide the people of Metro Manila with much-needed park and recreation facilities, while also protecting its filtration facilities. MWSS Chairman Bayani F. Fernando, in his visit to the facilities, noted the agency's efforts in restoring and beautifying several of its landmark properties. "I see the progress you have already made in the beautification of the Balara facilities," he commended, "please keep up the good work."

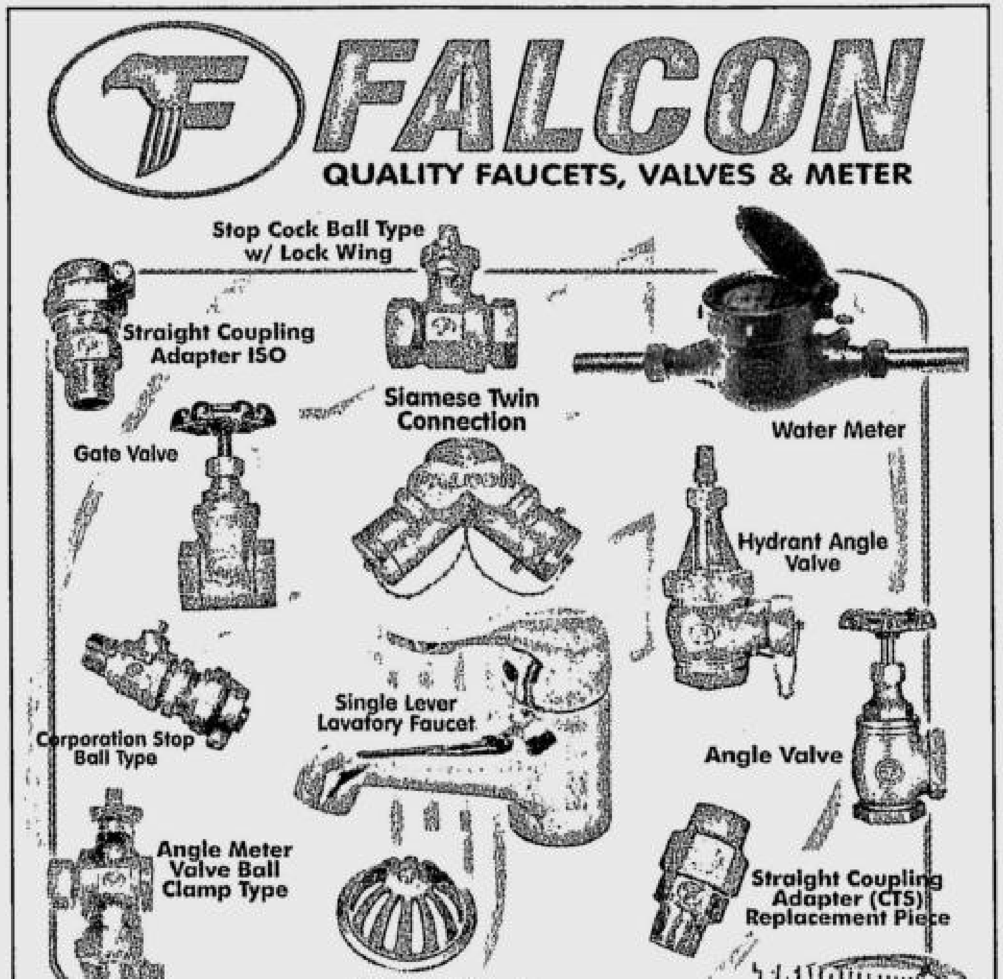
Plugging Leaks

During a recent consultation of MWSS officials with newly installed Chairman of the Board Secretary Bayani F. Fernando, one of the prevailing obstacles in the fulfillment of MWSS' objectives was discussed. The incidence of Non-revenue Water (water lost due to leaks, illegal connections, and other reasons), or NRW, has long been a bane in the agency's history. Sec. Fernando suggested a closer scrutiny of these pipeline losses. After all, it is true that every plugged leak translates into revenues earned. It will also prove to be cheaper than looking for alternative sources of water.

Sec. Fernando manifested a good appreciation of the magnitude of the NRW problem and encouraged the MWSS to help the Concessionaires look for appropriate approaches to reduce pipeline losses. He also sought for the realignment of goals between that of the MWSS and that of the Concessionaires, towards a more do-able delivery of service.

Judging by the vast improvement of water supply and services being enjoyed nowadays by Filipinos, not to mention the multitude of projects and initiatives being pursued by the agency, the MWSS may just be a breath away from the fulfillment of its objectives.

The country is, indeed, fortunate to have such people in government who remain focused in their mission to ensure the provision of this elixir of life called **WATER**.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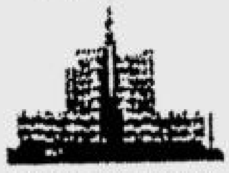
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Born on July 23, 1912

Who peacefully joined our Lord on February 18, 2003 at the age of 90.

Her loving children **Patria- Edgardo Florencio, Dalisay Lumba, Ligaya – Punjungan Amilbangsa, Mayumi – Cesar Bartolome, and Secretary and MMDA Chairman Bayani – Mayor Marides Fernando**; grandchildren, relatives and friends request fervent prayers and special petitions for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Our Lady of the Abandoned Parish Church, San Roque, Marikina City.

Interment will be held on Friday, February 21, 2003 at Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City following the 8:00 a.m. Mass at the Our Lady of the Abandoned Parish Church.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.
Always caring... **INQUIRER OBITUARIES**

DEATH ANNOUNCEMENT • MESSAGE OF THANKS • REQUIEMS • DEATH ANNIVERSARY • FREE OBIT DESIGN

WE ACCEPT CREDIT CARDS and bank-to-bank payments

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:
❶ Copy of Death Certificate
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

Look beyond the night of sorrow,
There will come a blessed day;
There will be a glad tomorrow,
When the night has passed away.
And while I may now seem to have moved on to another plane
I live on – as all of you will.
I am one with the One and the All – as you all are.

Lucia Bañes Sangle

"Wawa Lucy"

(Widow of the late **Narciso R. Sangle**)

Died in the Grace of our Lord
on February 18, 2003.

She is survived by her children and their respective families:

Adoracion (Dory) S.
& Armando Bernabe

Reginald S. Bernabe
Fortune & Roy Miraflor
  Isabelle
  Kimberly
  Jordan
Jorge & Lorna Bernabe
  Nicolo
Camille S. Bernabe
Angel & Nats Bernabe
  Bryan
  Bea
  Benjo

Amelia (Amy) S. Badiola
& Romy Porcia (†)

Chris Badiola
Jovy & Bambi Badiola
  Cedie
  Zander
Eldie & Joyce Badiola
  Jan
Jong Jong Badiola
Rommel Porcia

Rosario (Chary) S.
& Tom Misa (†)

Tep Tep & Hazel Misa
Pinky & Roy Caluag

Eugenio B. Sangle

Marichelle & Jeffrey Capalar
  Mico
  CJay
Archie & Hazel Sangle
Rochelle Sangle
Eugene Sangle, Jr.
Marjorie Sangle
Mary Joy Sangle
Andrew Sangle

She is now at the Arlington Memorial Chapels, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City. Interment will be on Sunday, February 23, 2003 at the Himlayang Pilipino Memorial Park right after the 2:00 p.m. Mass at the Himlayang Pilipino Chapel.

CLASSIFIEDS

PHILIPPINE DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION

NOTICE TO DEPOSITORS OF THE CLOSED RURAL BANK OF ECHAGUE (ISABELA), INC.

1. Starting February 20, 2003, the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation (PDIC) thru its duly authorized representatives shall receive claims for insured deposits maintained with the closed Rural Bank of Echague (Isabela), Inc.
2. Depositors are requested to proceed directly to the premises of the said closed bank from February 20 to February 27, 2003, Monday thru Fridays, during office hours, where PDIC representatives are stationed to accept claims and entertain queries of depositors.

   After the said dates, all depositors can file their claims personally at the PDIC office from Monday to Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., or by mail addressed to –

   The Manager
   Claims Processing Department
   Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation
   2228 Chino Roces Avenue, 1231 Makati City
3. Depositors are advised to present the following requirements to our representatives when filing their claims:
   a. Original evidence of deposit such as Savings Passbook and/or Certificate of Time Deposit; and
   b. Latest identification document (ID) bearing the depositor's signature

   Other documents may be required by our representatives in the course of their processing of claims filed.
4. Pursuant to the provisions of R.A. 3591, as amended, the prescriptive date (last day) for filing of claims for insured deposits in the closed Rural Bank of Echague (Isabela), Inc. is on **July 27, 2004**. After **July 27, 2004**, PDIC as insurer, shall no longer accept any claim for insured deposits maintained with the said closed bank.

PHILIPPINE DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION

(PDI - Feb. 19 & 20, 2003)

BAGUIO WATER DISTRICT

"WE SERVE"

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ACCREDITATION AND TO BID

The BAGUIO WATER DISTRICT invites interested parties to apply for accreditation and to bid for a **ONE YEAR WATER SUPPLY CONTRACT OF FIVE THOUSAND (5,000) CUBIC METERS PER DAY WITH AN APPROVED BUDGET COST OF TWENTY PESOS (P20.00) PER CUBIC METER.**

The bid documents shall contain the Instruction to Bidders utilizing the two-envelope system. Only bids of accredited shall be accepted.

Accreditation/Registration forms and bid documents can be obtained at the BWD Purchasing Office after payment of a non-refundable fee of FIVE THOUSAND PESOS (P5,000.00).

Deadline for obtaining Accreditation/Registration form is on **March 7, 2003.**

BWD reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids, to waive any informalities in the bids and accept bids most advantageous to the District.

BWD PBAC (IN-HOUSE)

(PDI - Feb. 20 & 27, 2003)

Cagayan Economic Zone Authority

7/F Westar Building, 611 Shaw Boulevard, Pasig City, 1603 Philippines
Tel. No. (632)636-5780 to 82 Fax (632)631-3997

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND TO BID

The Cagayan Economic Zone Authority (CEZA) is a government corporation mandated by law to supervise and manage the Cagayan Special Economic Zone and Freeport (CSEZFP) in Santa Ana, Cagayan.

CEZA hereby invites interested Consulting Firms to apply for pre-qualification and subsequently to bid, if pre-qualified for the **Consultancy Services for the Preparation of Detailed Engineering Design and Construction Management Services for the Rehabilitation and Development of Port Irene in the Cagayan Special Economic Zone and Freeport.**

Interested firms must have extensive experience in the port development projects and administration of similar works.

Prospective bidders should submit a copy of their SEC and/or DTI Registration and Letter of Intent to pre-qualify and submit bid proposals to the **The PEAC Chairman**, *Cagayan Economic Zone Authority, 7/F Westar Building, 611 Shaw Boulevard, Pasig City, 1603 Philippines or at CEZA, Main Avenue, San Gabriel Village, Tuguegarao City.*

Pre-qualification forms shall be available from ***February 24 to March 10,2003*** for a non-refundable amount of **P2,000.00.** Five (5) copies of duly accomplished pre-qualification statements shall be submitted on or before **5:00 P.M.** of **17 March 2003.**

CEZA reserves the right to reject any and/or all bids, waive any formality therein and to award the contract for the project to the bid deemed most advantageous to the Philippine Government.

(Sgd.) **JOSE V. HIPOLITO**
Administrator & Chief Executive Officer

February 20 & 27, 2003

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www.jobmarketonline.com

Republic of the Philippines
MANILA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AUTHORITY
Ninoy Aquino International Airport, Metro Manila

INVITATION FOR CONSULTING SERVICES

The Manila International Airport Authority (MIAA) invites eligible Filipino consulting firms duly registered with the Department of Trade and Industry or the Securities and Exchange Commission for the purpose of drawing a long list from which a selection shall be made for the provision of consulting services for the **Engineering and Design Services for the Proposed Upgrading of Runway13/31.**

The selected Consultant who shall be screened and evaluated by the MIAA Prequalification, Evaluation and Award Committee (MIAA-PEAC) in accordance with procedures of the NEDA Guidelines on the Procurement of Consulting Services for Government Projects (Implementing Rules and Regulations of Executive Order No. 164), shall be responsible in the preparation of Preliminary and Detailed Design for the proposed upgrading of Runway13/31 and other connecting taxiways, preparation and submittal of general conditions, technical specifications, bid schedule and estimates. It is a must that the Consultant has extensive experience in engineering design for upgrading of existing airfield facilities and familiar with ICAO standards.

Consultants who wish to offer their services are requested to submit an official transmittal letter/statement together with their duly accomplished and notarized prequalification statements, as provided under Appendix A of the NEDA Guidelines, not later than February 28, 2003 at the Pavements and Grounds Division, MIAA Engineering Building, MIA Road, Pasay City during official business hours only. Consultant's Prequalification Forms may also be secured from the Pavement and Grounds Division Office from February 17-21, 2003 upon presentation of this advertisement and official letter of intent. Interested foreign consultants with extensive experience in the type of service and duly registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission may associate themselves with legitimate Filipino Consultants and must have proper authorization to practice their profession locally with appropriate Philippine professional regulatory agencies.

(Sgd.) **ELPIDIO L. MENDOZA**
Chairman
MIAA-PEAC

(PDI--Feb. 14 & 20, 2003)

NTC-OSPAC closer to the public

IN CONSONANCE with the program of the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) to bring its services closer to the public, NTC will be setting up One Stop Public Assistance Center (OSPAC) at SM Megamall (Bldg. A, near National Bookstore) on 22 February 2003 from 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Requests for blocking of lost/stolen cell phones and complaints against service providers may be filed with NTC-OSPAC on the above date and venue.

Public is advised to bring the following requirements for blocking of lost/stolen cell phones: photo copy of two (2) valid IDs, receipt of purchase or IMEI barcode sticker, police report in the absence of a proof ownership. The IMEI barcode stickers are normally found on the box.

HILARIO S. MURILLO, SR.

VICE-CHAIRMAN of Cardinal Santos Medical Center
who peacefully joined his Creator on Feb. 16, 2003
at the age of 68.

His bereaved family, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at the Felicidad Chapel of Arlington Memorial Chapel, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Mass will be offered at the following dates:

Feb. 17, 2003	12:00 n.n.
Feb 17-21, 2003	6:00 p.m.
Feb. 22, 2003	7:00 a.m.

Interment will be on February 22, 2003, Saturday at 9:00 a.m. (after the 7:00 a.m. Mass) at the Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque.

Please omit flowers.

The Board of Directors
Management and Staff
Of
CARDINAL SANTOS MEDICAL CENTER
Condoles with the family of the late

HILARIO S. MURILLO, SR.

Vice-Chairman
who peacefully joined his Creator on February 16, 2003
at the age of 68.

We join his bereaved family, relatives and friends in their prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at the Felicidad Chapel of Arlington Memorial Chapel, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Mass will be offered at the following dates:

Feb. 17, 2003	12:00 n.n.
Feb 17-21, 2003	6:00 p.m.
Feb. 22, 2003	7:00 a.m.

Interment will be on February 22, 2003 (after the 7:00 a.m. Mass) at the Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque.

★★★★

GENERAL ROMEO C. ESPINO (Ret)

FORMER CHIEF OF STAFF
ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES

SOLDIER, AGRONOMIST, LAWYER, BUSINESS LEADER
AND *HUMANITARIAN*

Peacefully passed into the loving arms
of the Lord on February 17, 2003 at the age of 88.

His loving wife **Belle**; children **Leslie** and **Diana**, **Ralph** and **Cristina**, **Maria Teresa** (†) and **Ronald Blankenhorn**, **Ricardo** and **Maribelle**, **Helene** and **Tito**;

Grandchildren **Monica** and **Michael Deakin**, **Richard**, **Adelaide**, **Paolo**, **Nikki** and **Giancarlo Diroma**, **Rhoni Blankenhorn** and **Guillermo**;

Great grandchildren **Francesca Deakin** and **Giana Diroma**;

Relatives and friends deeply mourn his passing and request the pious readers to join them in prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state in the St. Ignatius Cathedral, Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City where the Holy Mass will be celebrated every evening at 7:00 p.m. (entry via Gate 1, along Boni Serrano Avenue)

The funeral Mass will be celebrated on Saturday, February 22, 2003 at 9:00 a.m. at the St. Ignatius Cathedral, Camp Aguinaldo. Interment, with military honors, will follow at the Libingan ng mga Bayani, Fort Bonifacio, Makati City.

"Even
when
I walk
through a
dark
valley, I
feel no
harm. For
you are at
my side,
your rod
and staff
give me
courage..."

Psalm 23:4

LICERIO C. VERTIDO

Aged 93

Former District Engineer of Regions I & II

Passed away on February 13, 2003
in Lancaster, California, U.S.A.

He is survived by his loving wife **Carmen Cristobal-Vertido**; their children **Lydia & Nonio Savellano, Ramon, Alberto & Estelita Luna, Canisio & Sonia Abesamis, Carmelo & Josefina Prieto, Susan & Leo Garganera, Lourdes & Ramon Gatdula Jr., Ma. Socorro & Danilo Mendiola**; their grandchildren & great grandchildren.

Interment will take place at the Forest Lawn Mortuary in Covina, California, U.S.A. on February 21, 2003.

Condolences may be sent to: 3643 Caribou Creek Court, Ontario, California, 91761, U.S.A.

SY HUA BING DE GUZMAN

of Sta. Cruz, Marinduque and Lucena City

has joined his wife ***"Maria Rosa Kho"***
and peacefully rests in the infinite warmth and embrace of our Lord
on February 17, 2003, at the age of 74.

His loving children, **Nemelia & Arthuro, Ely & Romy (†), Marilyn & Charlie, Elizabeth & Romulo Jr., August & Josephine, Jupiter & Janna, Wison, Reynaldo, Gerry, Jenevieve & Ivan, Clarence Clifford**; grandchildren, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Holy Rosary Chapel,
C. M. Recto St., Lucena City.

Interment will be at St. Ferdinand Memorial Park,
Lucena City, on Saturday, 22 February 2003,
after the 9:00 a.m. Mass.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

Always caring... **INQUIRER OBITUARIES**

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:
❶ Copy of Death Certificate ❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

WE ACCEPT CREDIT CARDS and bank-to-bank payments

DEATH ANNOUNCEMENT
MESSAGE OF THANKS · DEATH ANNIVERSARY
REQUIEMS · FREE OBIT DESIGN

The Board of Directors, Management and Staff

of the

THE ROBELLE GROUP OF COMPANIES

and

LCM PHILIPPINES, INC.

offers its deepest condolences to the bereaved family, relatives and friends of the late

GENERAL ROMEO C. ESPINO (Ret)

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

who peacefully passed into the loving arms
of the Lord on February 17, 2003 at the age of 88.

His body lies in state in the St. Ignatius Cathedral, Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City where the Holy Mass will be celebrated every evening at 7:00 p.m. (entry via Gate 1, along Boni Serrano Avenue)

The funeral Mass will be celebrated on Saturday, February 22, 2003 at 9:00 a.m. at the St. Ignatius Cathedral, Camp Aguinaldo. Interment, with military honors, will follow at the Libingan ng mga Bayani, Fort Bonifacio, Makati City.

Email: pr_pep@inquirer.com.ph

People, Events & Products

aespinosa@inquirer.com.ph

Aries Espinosa, Editor

P&A celebrates 15 years, affiliation with Grant Thornton

PUNONGBAYAN & Araullo (P&A), the third largest public accounting firm in the Philippines, celebrates the 15th year of its founding this February. P&A, founded in 1988 by Benjamin Punongbayan and Jose Araullo, has also recently been admitted as a member of Grant Thornton International, one of the world's leading organizations of accounting and consulting firms.

To celebrate the two events, P&A will hold a cocktail reception at the Makati Shangri-La this month. Guests will include top executives of Grant Thornton led by Gabriel Azedo, divisional director for Asia Pacific.

P&A provides a full range of professional services in the areas of audit and assurance, tax advisory and compliance, corporate finance and business support services, using leading-edge systems and technology in a culture demanding the highest standards of quality, integrity and competence. Starting with only seven people in 1988, P&A now has over 400 people and four offices around the country.

P&A's admission as a member of Grant Thornton will boost its growth, says P&A managing partner Benjamin Punongbayan. "We are confident that the affiliation with Grant Thornton will help us achieve our growth objectives in the long term and will fit well into our current market strategies."

According to David McDonnell, worldwide chief executive of Grant Thornton, "P&A provides the Grant Thornton international network with a very significant presence in the country, giving a strong, wide base to fulfill the opportunities arising as the Asia Pacific region expands its economic growth." Recognizing the major role that P&A is expected to play in the region, McDonnell confirmed that Grant Thornton has chosen Manila as the venue for its Asia Pacific Advisory Committee Meeting in July.

Grant Thornton International operates in 110 countries, bringing together some 22,000 personnel in 585 offices.

ROOSEVELT COLLEGE 70TH FOUNDATION

Sen. Edgardo Angara was the special guest at the recent Roosevelt College System 70th founding anniversary. In photo is Mrs Lydia Garcia-Mendoza (3rd from left), who was cited for 35 years of dedicated service to the institution, with Mr. Eddie de Guzman of the RC Cainta Alumni Association (left) and Dr. Carmelita U. Cruz, college dean (right).

BERKLEY AND FAMILY FIRST CONCLUDE PROMO

Berkley International Plans' marketing arm, Family First Inc., recently concluded its Libreng Bahay, Bagong Buhay 2 Promo. In the grand raffle held last Dec. 23 at its corporate headquarters at the Enterprise Center in Makati City, Family First marketing officer Alice Baltazar (right), supervised by the Department of Trade and Industry sales and promotions head Gertrudes Perez, drew the winner for the grand prize of a house and lot in Antipolo. Among thousands of entries, the name of Ms Jenny Evangelista of Las Piñas City was picked as the winner of a Vicenza model house and lot at Gardens of Maia Alta Subdivision, Antipolo, which costs over P3 million, inclusive of taxes. Ms Evangelista is not a plan owner. Under the promo, which ran from January to December 2002, anybody who sat down for a Family First presentation became eligible to join the raffle. On its fifth year now in the country, Family First has given away close to P131 million worth of prizes in its 'absolutely-no-obligation-to-buy' raffles and promotions.

It gets you this Globe Handyphone FREE!
citibank

CITIBANK, GLOBE TEAM UP FOR LATEST PROMO

The country's leading credit card issuer and mobile telecommunications company teamed up to introduce an exciting promotion for the public. From Jan. 15 to Feb. 28, approved applicants for a Citibank Silver or Gold Visa or Mastercard, Citibank Clear MasterCard and Citibank Visa Platinum will be entitled to an exclusive Globe Handyphone offer: a free Nokia 3530 for their first subscription to a plan 800 or higher; or a free Nokia 3530 for a plan 500 for those availing of their second G-plan subscription. Citibank's cards business director Benjie Oliva (2nd from left) and Globe Handyphone's Nikko Acosta, head-consumer postpaid, recently signed the agreement. Joining them are Citibank's Bea Teh-Tan (rightmost), vice president for cards acquisition and Globe Handyphone's Joanna Africa, group product manager for Globe Handyphone-postpaid acquisition.

ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK
P.O. Box 789 Manila, Philippines
6 ADB Avenue, Mandaluyong City, Philippines

INVITATION FOR BIDS
FOR SCRAP MANAGEMENT AND ASSET DISPOSAL SERVICES
Contract No. ADB/OAS-2003/014

1. The Asian Development Bank ("ADB"), a multilateral development finance institution headquartered in Manila, Philippines, invites interested companies to submit bids for the bidding for scrap management and asset disposal services at ADB Building, No. 6 ADB Avenue, Mandaluyong City, Philippines. The services involve handling of the documentation and sale of used ADB property, including, but not limited to IT equipment, printing machinery, materials handling equipment; motor vehicles, among others which become available from time to time at the best possible price be it public auction, on-line auction or sealed bid tender. The services also include managing ADB's shredding operations and removal of shredded paper, old newspapers, etc., from the ADB premises. The scope of services is provided in detail in the Work Performance Statement given to interested applicants.
2. The bidding is open to firms or joint ventures from eligible member countries of ADB. Such a company has an extensive experience and developed market tools to remove items scheduled for disposal within shortest possible time thus eliminating storage problem, dispose them through methods that are most beneficial to ADB, complying with host country regulations relating to applicable taxes and duties of the host country and remit money to ADB. A commission paid by ADB to the qualified company should not exceed current cost of the disposing. Moreover, it is expected that special expertise of the qualified company should provide ADB with higher income generated from disposal.
3. The contract shall be for one (1) year and thereafter ADB has the option to renew the contract every year for a maximum of five years.
4. Eligible applicants may obtain the bid documents by calling or faxing the Head, Contracts Section, General Services Division, Office of Administrative Services, Asian Development Bank, No. 6 ADB Avenue, Mandaluyong City, Philippines at Tel. Nos. 632-5641/632-4231, Fax No. 636-2567 and e-mail addresses: adjusupbekova@adb.org or dmunoz@adb.org from **21, 24-25 February 2003 (8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.)** The documents are available for a non-refundable fee of Pesos Three Hundred (P300.00).
5. Bidders will be required to submit two copies (marked "Original" and "Copy") of their bid documents each in a sealed envelope, which must be delivered either by hand or by registered mail addressed to the attention of "Head, Contracts Section, General Services Division, Office of Administrative Services, Asian Development Bank, 6 ADB Avenue, Mandaluyong City, Philippines", not later than 5:00 p.m. on **13 March 2003**, and be clearly marked "Invitation For Bids for Scrap Management and Asset Disposal Services, Contract No. ADB/OAS-2003/014".
6. This invitation does not entail any commitment on the part of ADB, either financial or otherwise. Any cost of preparation for bid documents shall be borne solely by the applicant. ADB reserves the right to accept or reject any bid.

(Sgd.) NORMIN S. PAKPAHAN
Director
General Services Division
Office of Administrative Services

(PDI – Feb. 19 & 20, 2003)

Marriage Encounter weekend slated in Tagaytay

THE REACHING Out for the Lord (ROL) Series of the Tuklasan Sector – Marriage Encounter Foundation of the Phils., is slated to sponsor another Marriage Encounter (ME) seminar weekend on March 7 to 9 at the Angels' Hill Seminar and Formation Center, Tagaytay City.

Spearheaded by Boy-Baby Dizon, together with their ROL 16 classmates, the weekend seminar is ideal for married couples seeking fulfillment and rejuvenation in their marriages. The 3-day live-in seminar also hopes to redirect their relationship to be Christ-centered.

Scheduled to serve as ecclesial team are: Fr. Jess V. Fernandez, S.J., Buddy-Mel Macaranas and Nick-Baby Aquino.

For reservations (on a first-come, first-served basis), please call: Boy-Baby Dizon - 911-4998; Ricky-Marissa Manalo – 634-1570 or (0917) 904-2943; Remy-Yeng Mora – (0919) 585-6152 or (049) 534-2380; Lowell-Imelda Tan – (0917) 836-7552; Gerry-Gina Martinez – 871-5141; Gerry-Shiela Reglos – 807-3338 or 770-6760; Freddie-Rachel de Leon – 536-8451; Joe-Janet Saldaña - 842-4349; and Bong-Zosie Fajardo - 742-2434 or 742-5981.

Deadline for reservation is on Feb. 28. Seminar fee is P3,600/couple for the entire 3-day weekend.

APC voluntarily recalls two uninterruptible power supply models

AMERICAN Power Conversion through it's Philippine representative office announced a voluntary recall of two models in its Back-UPS CS uninterruptible power supply (UPS) line due to potential safety issues that may result in overheating and represent a potential fire hazard. The total number of affected devices being recalled worldwide is approximately 2.1 million.

APC has received eight reports worldwide of units overheating resulting in the melting of the unit's outer casing. Three of the reported incidents resulted in minor property damage. No injuries have been reported.

The recall is limited to two specific models in APC's Back-UPS CS product line – the Back-UPS CS 350 and the Back-UPS CS 500, in both 120-volt and 230-volt models. The affected units were manufactured between November 2000 and December 2002. The units were sold primarily through computer and electrical distribution, catalog and retail outlets worldwide.

Consumers with affected units can identify them by the model markings on the front of the unit and by the serial numbers located on the bottom of the unit. Only units with serial numbers having the first six characters in the following ranges are affected: AB0048 through AB0251; BB0104 through BB0251; JB0125 through JB0251.

Any units with an "R" at the end of the serial number are not part of the recall.

APC recommends that the user immediately remove the UPS unit from service by turning off all connected equipment, turning the UPS unit off, and then unplugging the unit from the electrical outlet.

To learn more about the process for replacing the affected units, users should call 637-5457 local 109.

"We remain highly confident in the overall safety and reliability of all our products, and have been working diligently to ensure that this action results in a minimum inconvenience to our customers and channel partners," said Rodger B. Dowdell Jr, APC president and CEO.

Life in the Spirit seminar

THE BUKLOD ng Pag-Ibig Catholic Charismatic Community, under the spiritual direction of Bishop Federico O. Escaler SJ, announces it will be holding Catholic Life in the Spirit Seminar (CLSS) No. 48 on Feb. 22 and 23 at the PRRM Bldg. Corner Mother Ignacia and Dr. Lazcano Streets, Quezon City. The theme for this seminar is "Remain in Me and You Will Bear Much Fruit". Prior to the CLSS proper, an orientation was held Feb 1 at the BNP Healing Center. For further inquiries, interested parties can call the BNP Center at 732-3421.

Product FILES

A slice of authentic Creole in Manila

BEFORE November last year, you won't find any local restaurant offering authentic Cajun and Creole cuisine. That's because the said fares, which are native to New Orleans, require thorough knowledge about the people who concocted the spicy, yummy dishes that have evolved from the time Louisiana had become the melting pot of French, Spanish, and many other cultures.

But a group of Filipino entrepreneurs took pains of studying about Creole cuisine if only to give patrons a genuine sampling of New Orleans favorites. Coming from a long background in the restaurant industry, Mike Besa and his partners opened Kidd Creole last Nov. 25 at the 3rd floor of Greenbelt 3 in Makati to end the longtime clamor for a restaurant that's "true-blue Creole."

And so the result is a selection of compact but authentic Creole and Cajun dishes you can expect whenever you're in New Orleans, spicy bold and colorful, the dishes are all representative of the rustic life in Louisiana – simple in presentation but rich in taste. Helping Besa's team in bringing out the best of Creole dishes is chef Mick Zalis, who also had a wide experience in fine-dining and international dishes.

Located at the easternmost wing of Greenbelt 3, the restaurant enjoys a spacious area with a capacity for about 200 persons. The cozy interior comprises of glass and wood enhanced with warm lights, while outside is a veranda good for about 120 people who'd love to enjoy live entertainment of blues music held at the resto every Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. Visit Kid Creole from Monday to Saturday at 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and on weekends from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Call 757-4795 to 96 for inquiries.

BITS Clips

St. Joseph Academy reunion

ALL ALUMNI of St. Joseph Academy Batch '63 are enjoined to attend its Ruby Anniversary on Feb. 22, Saturday, at 1 p.m. at the La Consolacion College Mini Hotel in Kalookan City. For more details, call Cora Banta (285-9067), Cora Centeno (330-2026), or Elvie Dagumboy (631-3017).

Quirino High Batch '76 reunion

ALL 1976 graduates of Quirino High School, Project 3, are invited to their first reunion themed "QHS Batch 76 Leading the Way Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow" on Feb 22 at Riverbend Hotel, Riverbanks, Marikina City. Registration starts at 6 p.m. For further details, call Emily at 643-3658, 0917-8303555, Marie at 816-2136 or 0918-9108060, or Leila at 259-0927 or 0918-5508346.

UP School of Economics reunion '03

THE ALUMNI of the University of the Philippines School of Economics will hold its alumni homecoming on Feb 22, 3 p.m. at the Upse grounds in Diliman. Graduates of 1962, 1963, 1977, 1978, 1982, 1983, 1987, 1988, 1992 and 1993 are spearheading the preparations for this year's homecoming dubbed as FF & FF or Fun, Food and Friendship in February. The highlight of this year's event is the groundbreaking ceremony of the UP Economic Policy Center, which the Upse Alumni Association is building in support of the Upse's objectives. The Upseaa envisioned a center that will encourage economic policy researches and debates. The Center will also house various school activities including students' organizations. Alumni are requested to get in touch with Santi Dapul at 927-5223 or Sherry Palencia-Verzola at 922-2862. For inclusion in the alumni directory, alumni should fill up the information sheet at www.econ.upd.edu.ph and fax to Rose San Pascual at 920-5481.

E-mail: pr_motoring@inquirer.com.ph
Editor Cesar D. Mangawang

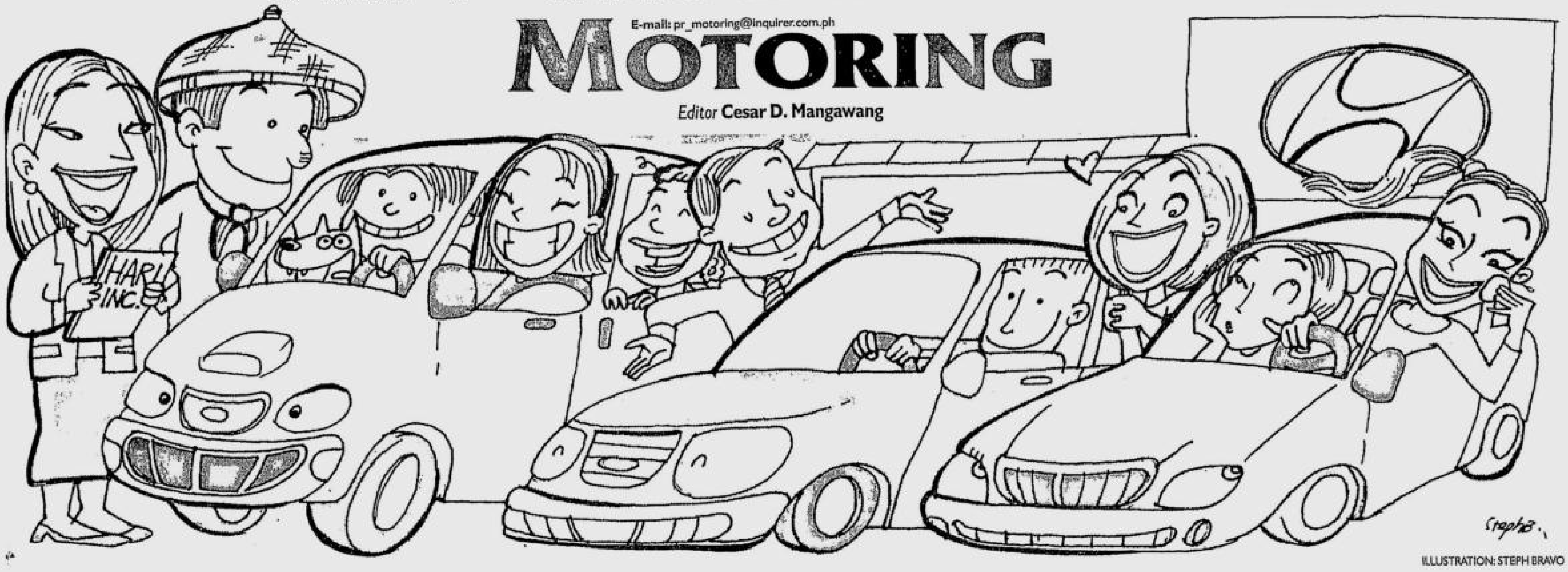


ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

Hyundai eyes RP car mart domination

By Tessa R. Salazar

AUTOMOTIVE spectators say what Japan automakers has achieved in 40 years is taking Korean automakers only half the time to do the same.

The Korean automotive phenomenon has led the world to closely watch Korea not just in terms of becoming an emerging market but as a global player in industrial development, especially in the automotive field.

Here in the Philippines, the object we can relate to Korean automakers most is the Starex. This full-size family van of carmaker Hyundai Motor Co. carries an unconventional design. And that works for Filipinos. It has worked so well, in fact, that wherever a motorist turns, he or she would most likely see one of the 25,000 Starex vans passing by. That's just the number of vans that were shipped in for the past five years since it was introduced.

Appeal

During the early stages of Starex's popularity in the mid-'90s, anybody could ship in the Starex. "Six years ago, Filipinos bought the Starex even if there was no official dealer or official warranty," said Hyundai Automotive Resources Inc. (Hari) general manager Fe Agudo.

"Starex appealed to the Pinoys' taste and needs. And now, its quality has been proven. *Subok na ang tibay* (Its lasting effect is already tested)."

It seemed Starex gained immediate market acceptance because Filipinos were looking for a good-looking van. Starex gave them that. And more. Its spacious interior was a big plus.

Not long after its entry, the Starex became a status symbol despite the public's impression of Korean cars as inferior to Japanese cars.

"Someone had to have a Starex to be in. If you stand on any street and do a quick count, every minute a Starex would pass by," said Agudo.

The demand was so great, Agudo said, that buyers were even willing to risk the absence of any warranty or service venues. There wasn't even a showroom to display the Starex varieties.

This buying craze marked the Filipino motoring public's shifting tastes. Agudo said Filipinos no longer wanted to become just traditional buyers.

Realizing its sizable market in the Philippines, Hyundai Motor Co. established Hari in 2001 to be the company's official distributor in the country with 10 dealers nationwide. Hari was also the service center the first 25,000 owners of the Starex were waiting five years for.

Watch out

Hari is scheduled to roll out more than just Starexes, what with its 17 product lines in passenger cars and light commercial vehicles. The known Hyundai vehicles include the Matrix, Sonata, Grandeur and Centennial. Agudo said Hyundai is very excited with the brisk sales of Hyundai vehicles in the Philippines, hence it will be launching this year fresh models aimed at the young market.

"Watch out for Hyundai. Exciting models are on the way," she said.

Agudo stressed, however, that its first mission is to take care of its Starex owners.

Some 2,400 Starex vans were sold in the country in 2002, topping the passenger van segment, according to Hari.

Global invasion

The vision of Hyundai Motor is to belong to the top five auto global players by 2010. Right now the Korean auto firm occupies the eighth position.

Hyundai Motor considers the family and youth segments the fastest-growing auto markets. It said the company intends to focus on these segments.

Chung Mong-koo, Hyundai chair and CEO, said the entire 50,000-strong workforce of the company has been mobilized to come up with exciting models that would appeal to families and young buyers. And he ordered his staff not just to produce eye-catching cars, but quality vehicles that could last a lifetime.

The eldest living son of the man who founded Hyundai, Chung took over the reins of the company in 1999 and steered it to profitability not only at home but also overseas. He focused on improved quality and design, and offered the longest warranty (10 years) anywhere. Hyundai was able to penetrate the tough North American market.

In a recent article of The New York Times, Hyundai was cited for plowing through the time-proven path to winning young customers: Offer the cheapest cars backed with the longest warranty. Hyundai's sales in the United States have quadrupled over the last four years, and the age of the average Hyundai buyer is 35.

When will I call Fernando a hero?

FULL TANK

Al S. Mendoza

THE ULTIMATE aim from the very start was to ease traffic in the metropolis. However, the way it's been done—or still being done—was half-heartedly.

That, in a nutshell, is the root cause of all these problems plaguing the implementation of the "color coding" on the big city's public utility vehicles.

Why it was done the selective way when it was first implemented boggles the mind.

* * *

I refer to the "color coding" enforced only on private vehicles, a policy adopted by the MMDA some years back.

That didn't help much as traffic was still heavy in the metropolis. Only starting at midnight up to the small hours of the morning did traffic ease, particularly at both Edsa and Commonwealth Avenue in Quezon City.

Some people have got to also sleep sometimes.

* * *

And then starting last Monday, the MMDA's Bayani Fernando enforced the "color coding" on the public utility vehicles. Surprise! Surprise! Suddenly, traffic was substantially eased in the big city.

But I was not surprised, though.

From the very start, even before there was no "color coding" yet, it had been my position that public utility vehicles are the main makers of heavy traffic in the big city.

For one, the majority of drivers of the public utility vehicles don't have discipline at all. Everything emanates from there: No discipline, no order.

For another, the buses occupy more than they can occupy—meaning, they stray into every lane imaginable, specifically at both Edsa and Commonwealth Avenue in Quezon City.

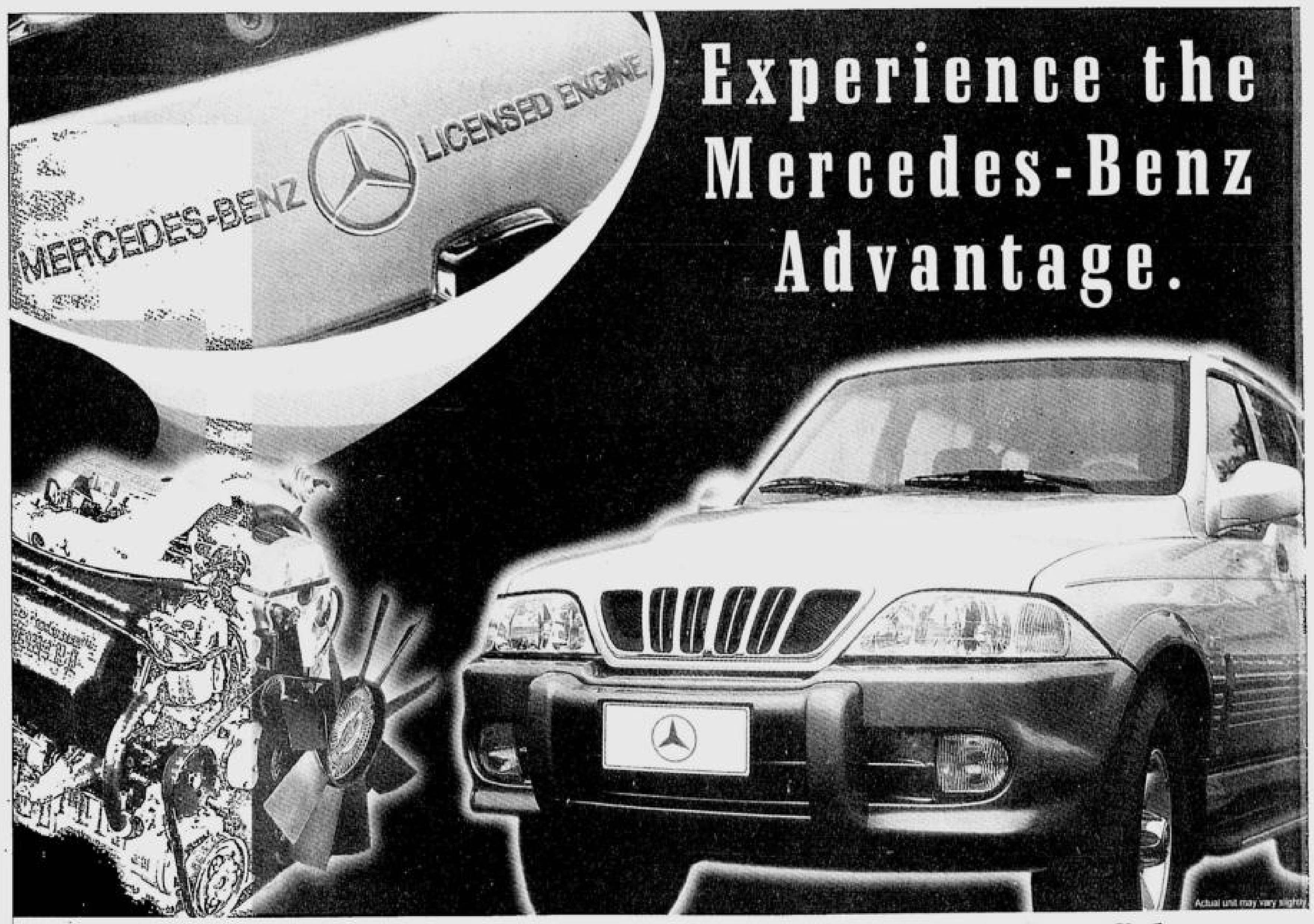
* * *

Look, the distance between the traffic lights from Roosevelt Avenue/Edsa and Taft/Edsa is quite long. Yet, why do we have a regular bumper-to-bumper case at Edsa, particularly from Kamuning to SM Megamall?

That's because drivers of public utility vehicles drive wildly on that stretch.

There are many buses that are almost empty, and yet they crowd Edsa; many drivers are fond of parking on the highway waiting for passengers who usually come in trickles anyway especially during off-hours of the day. The explanation is simple: If they could have their way, commuters would prefer riding in the Metro Tren than in buses. It's just too bad that at times, if not oftentimes, the trains teem with passengers.

WHEN/B14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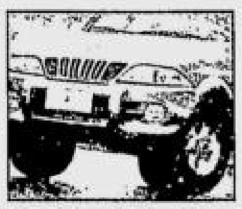
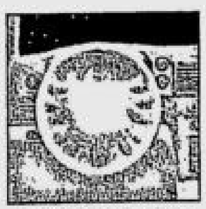
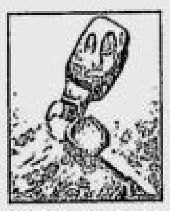

Anti-Lock Braking System

Ten passengers seating capacity


Leather-covered, adjustable steering wheel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Bikers' convention to stress riding safety, earn respect

By Charles E. Buban

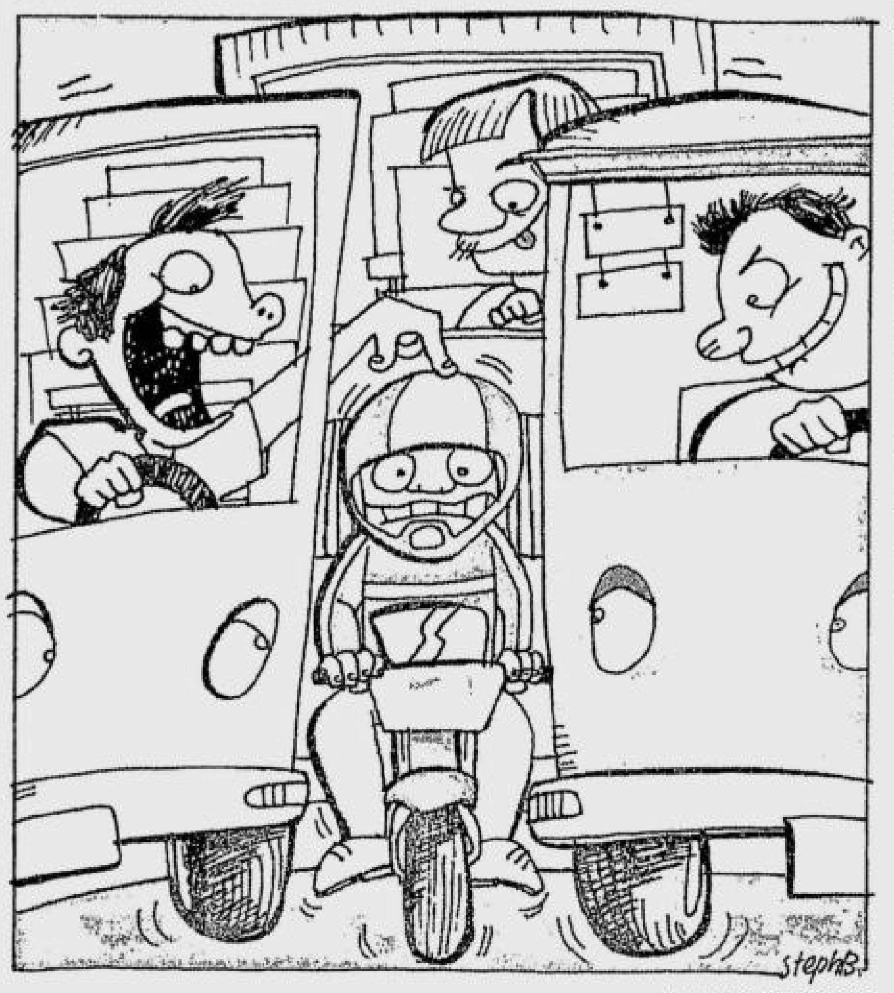


ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

HOW many times have we taken them for granted or want to hurt them if we were only allowed to? Or perhaps we were witness to how bus drivers skirt them like they don't even belong on the road.

We're talking here of motorcycle riders.

"It's sad but this is how we treat them on our road—a far cry from what our Asian neighbors regard these drivers," lamented Conrado Cabrera, president of the National Motorcycle Federation.

Although there are over 1.3 million motorcycles all over the Philippines, this only comprises 35 percent of the total 3.9 million motorized vehicles.

This is still too few compared to Vietnam's nearly 10 million motorcycles, about 94 percent of all its vehicles, the highest percentage in the region.

"In terms of popularity, motorcycle use in our country still lags behind our Asian neighbors," Cabrera said.

Week-long confab

This is one reason the federation will hold a week-long national convention this April to be held simultaneously in two venues: The Fort in Taguig and Subic Bay in Zambales.

"Although the event will help us think of ways how to promote motorcycle riding, the bottom line here is how we can gain respect from other fellow motorists," said Cabrera, whose group is in charge of organizing.

"There should be mutual respect among road users, whether they drive four-wheeled vehicles or motorcycles," he added.

The convention is now on its ninth year. Last year it was held in Davao while next year it will be Cebu's turn.

Bike week

The national convention will be held side by side with the first Bike Week, also a similar gathering of thousands of bikers, slated on April 24-30.

Sponsored by BMW Motorcycles and Shell Advance lubricants, the Bike Week will offer a chance for bikers to build camaraderie and share common passion and concerns.

Mad Dogs Motorcycle Club will lead the event. "Hundreds of booths would be open for lease for any individual or company interested in selling wares or offering services during the week-long event," revealed James Raterta, vice president of Mad Dogs

Raterta also shared that foreign delegates from 13 countries will also participate in the said event.

"This is a perfect time not only to promote motorcycling but the Philippines and its products, as well," he said.

Stricter implementation

Part of the national convention's agenda this year is to call for a stricter implementation of the ordinances requiring motorcyclists to wear helmets.

"Safety should be a paramount concern of every motorcycle rider and the wearing of a helmet and other protective gears should be encouraged, if not completely required," Cabrera stressed.

Cabrera is hoping that the government would act to strictly require riders to wear helmets.

Motorcycle tourism

Another aspect of the event is the promotion of tourism through motorcycle riding.

Cabrera and other presidents of various motorcycle clubs recently finished the President Run, a grueling 19-day ride from Manila to Aparri then down to General Santos City in Mindanao.

The ride aims to show that motorcycle riding is safe in all parts of the country.

"We want to show people that motorcycling in the Philippines is perfectly safe. We even went to Mindanao to prove that the region, despite the alarming news reports, is generally peaceful and safe," he concluded.

What a difference turbo makes

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

THE BEST way to appreciate the difference that turbo makes is to drive a normally aspirated car and then drive its turbocharged equivalent. I had the opportunity to experience the difference recently when a 2.0-liter Volvo S40 SE (P1.645 million) was loaned to me one weekend (see "The Entry-Level Volvo," Jan. 23) and a 2.0-liter Volvo S40 T4 (P1.845 million) two weekends later.

Statistics-wise, this is the difference that turbo makes: in the normally aspirated S40, maximum output is 136 brake horsepower and 190 Nm/4,000 rpm of torque. High-pressure turbo in the S40 T4 boosts the output to 200 bhp and 300 Nm/2,500-4,000 rpm of torque. Performance-wise, with the turbo's peak torque available from 2,500 rpm all the way to 4,000, when I first drove the T4, it took off so swiftly that I was literally knocked back in my seat and my ID cards in the open shelf under the dash spilled out.

The forced induction T4 easily outguns the normally aspirated S40, delivering a knockout amount of thrust with a minimal amount of lag. Impressed as I was with the energetic, eager acceleration of the S40, the T4's dynamic, spontaneous throttle response and full-power kickdown simply stunned me. The T4 bags 0 to 100 km per hour in eight seconds compared to the S40's 10.7, and its top speed is listed at 230 km/hr while the S40's is 200. On a straight stretch of the southbound Skyway, the T4 sprinted to 180 km/hr before the narrowing exit lane forced me to slow down.

Fun and safe to drive

The T4's performance may be prosaic compared to that of a six-cylinder, 343-bhp sports sedan like the BMW M3, but hey, remember that the T4 is only the high-end variant of the entry-level four-cylinder Volvo. Moreover, Volvo lacks the racing pedigree of the supercar-producing marques, having always been associated with safety—"Think Volvo—Think Safety" used to be its slogan. It is therefore marvelous that Volvo should come up with an entry level model that is such fun to drive.

Not only fun to drive, but equipped with world-famous Volvo safety features, including the Side Impact Protection System (SIPS), airbags with Inflatable Curtains, Whiplash Protection System (WHIPS) and "smart" dual stage airbags. In terms of safety features as well as luxury and comfort features, the T4 and the S40 are practically the same except for the color-coordinated moldings, chrome door handles, foldable (70/30 split) rear seat, puddle lights, two front cupholders, rear leather armrest, rear spoiler, sunroof and ISOFIX child safety seat attachments which only the T4 has. The T4 is shod with 16-inch 205/50ZR tires compared to the S40's 15-inch 195/60.

A turbocharged engine like the T4's requires strong braking power and this is provided by the front and rear disc brakes with ABS and Electronic Brake Distribution. In addition, the T4's Dynamic Stability Assistance (DSA) monitors and compares the rotational speed of all four wheels. The engine management system reduces torque when a loss of traction is detected by the DSA.

Greater performance

Volvo is by no means the only car manufacturer that has turned to turbo for greater small-car performance. Volkswagen's 1.8-liter, turbo gas-engine Passat is a best seller, ditto the turbocharged New Beetle. All Saab cars sold in North America have turbocharged engines.

Turbochargers were developed in 1924, using an engine's exhaust gases to power a turbine. The turbine drives a compressor that pushes extra air into the engine, resulting in more engine power without any required increase in engine size or fuel consumption. But turbo gained a bad image in the 1970s when durability became an issue because of cooling problems. When this problem was solved, turbo began making a comeback. The turbo's durability was unquestionably proven when Audi won the grueling 24 Hours of Le Mans race in the last three years with turbocharged cars. Even in a racing environment, Audi's turbocharged engines never failed.

Now more turbo models are being launched. The newest version of Chrysler's 2.4-liter, four-cylinder PT Cruiser, the 2003 PT Cruiser Turbo, is rated at 215 horsepower, a 65-hp boost from the naturally aspirated base plus 245 pound-feet of torque at 3,600 rpm. The turbocharged four is actually more powerful than the six-cylinder engine that was under consideration and will also go into the Dodge SRT-4, a high-performance version of the Neon that will be the second fastest vehicle in the Dodge fleet after the Viper.

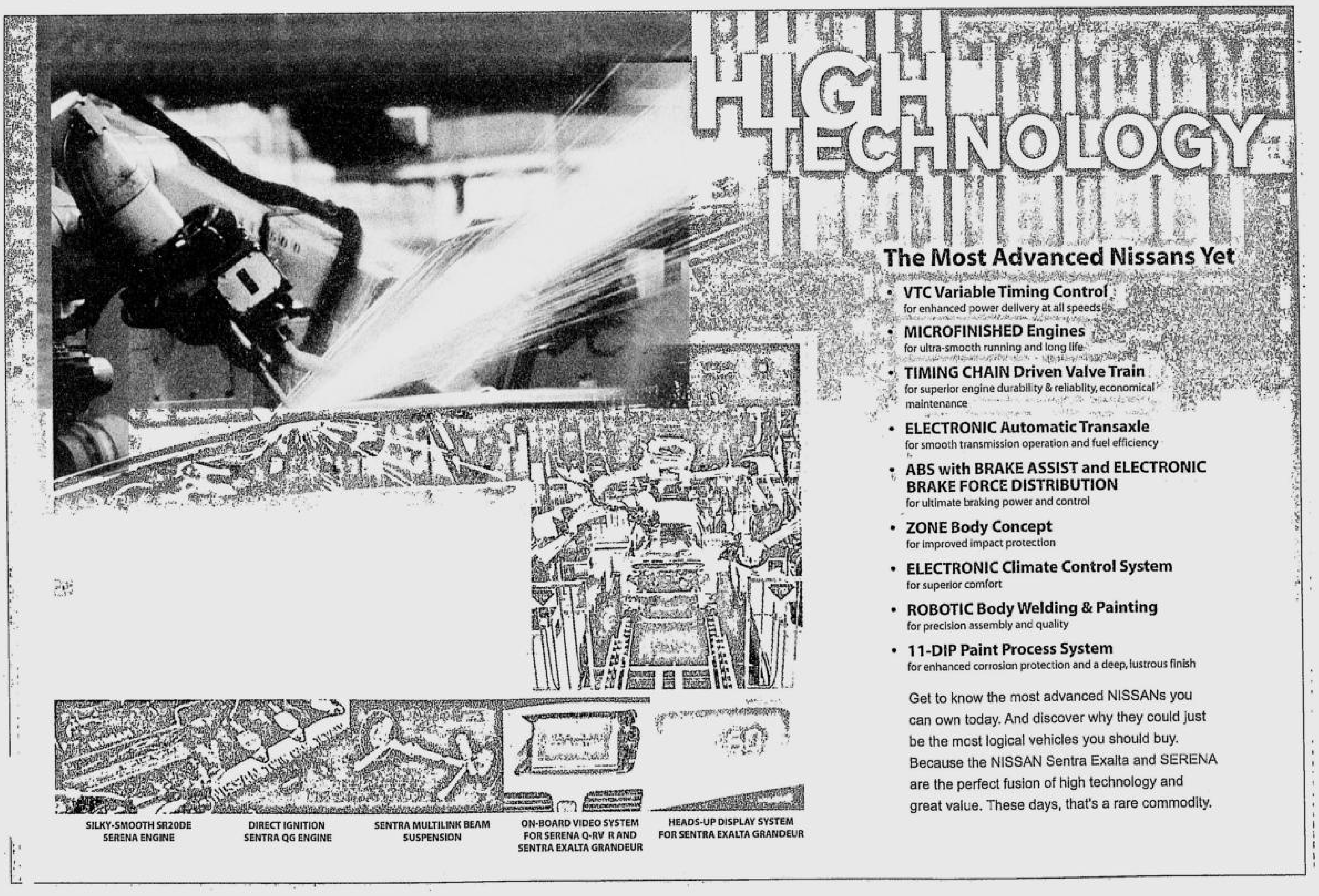
The 2003 limited production Mazdaspeed Protégé will have a turbocharged, 2.0-liter four-cylinder engine capable of pumping out 170 hp compared with 130 horses in a regular, normally aspirated Protege.

* * *

TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: Nothing's impossible for those who don't have to do it.

* * *

E-mail comments to asevilla@inquirer.com.ph.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Ford cuts Ranger prices, adds more features

By Tessa R. Salazar

THE NEW chrome grille gives the new Ranger a closer family likeness to the American Ranger and F series pickup.

LESS is more—for Ford Ranger pickups, at least.

The Ford Ranger 2003 edition boasts an antilock brake system and dual airbags. Furthermore, Rangers now even sport a more muscular look, and two-toned paint accents for the 4x4 variants.

All that, yet the Rangers are now cheaper by as much as P40,000 compared to the old Rangers.

So how can Ford afford to slash the price of the more powerful Ranger? Can a UN inspection team please investigate?

Reaping benefits

Ford Philippines president Henry Co said the reason behind the price rollback was that Ford was now starting to reap the benefits of "regionalization" and product specialization.

The Rangers, imported from the Ford Thailand manufacturing facility, offers the 4x2 XL with a 2.9-L intercooled turbo diesel engine at P620,000. The Ranger 4x2 Trekker (Monotone) or the Hi-Rider goes for P780,000, while the Ranger 4x4 XLT (two-tone and monotone) is priced at P960,000.

The Rangers' 117 horses generate a maximum torque of 280 Nm.

The price reduction, Co said, is a result of the added efficiencies of the auto manufacturer's operations through the Asean Free Trade Agreement, stressing the advantages that the Afta brings in terms of reduced costs, increased quality and economies of scale.

The Ford Rangers are produced and specialized at Ford Thailand. Co said he hopes that the Ford Escape and Ford Lynx which are being manufactured in the Sta. Rosa, Laguna facility would be as globally competitive.

Looks dep't

The new chrome grille gives the new Rangers a closer family likeness to the American Ranger and F series pickups, while the XLT models sport a tough new chrome bumper.

The new Rangers have now bigger headlamps. They also have a new bonnet, grille and bumper. A higher bonnet line gives the Ranger a more aggressive profile, a more imposing look. The width of its tires is bigger, from 235 to 265. The 4x4 is two-toned. There are more chrome touches on the bumper and the grille.

The designers created a body structure 30 percent more rigid. Its anti-lock brake system is a first among compact pickups.

There are dual airbags for the 4x4 and the Trekker. The interior has changed little, though the seat fabrics have been altered.

More features worth noting are the instrument panel's silver design and wider wheel arches.

4x4 transmission

There are three modes for the Ranger's 4x4 transmission: rear-wheel drive for normal road conditions, 4x5 high ratio for adverse on and off road condition and 4x5 low ratio for extreme off-road conditions.

Electronic remote free wheel hubs, fitted as standard, facilitate changing between 2W and 4WD high ratio at any speed and with ease for tasks like reversing and stopping versus some competitor systems.

Export, import

Ford Motor Co. Philippines further reinforces its position as the only volume exporter of completely built-up vehicles with a shipment of 2,000 vehicles in January.

The P4-billion Ford manufacturing facility in Sta. Rosa, Laguna, currently builds the Ford Escape SUV and the Ford Lynx/Laser passenger car and exports to Asean region.

Total exports are expected to reach 14,000 units this year and more than 65,000 vehicle units within the next five years.

The rollout of the FCMP Vehicle Export Program was firmed up in Washington, D.C., in November last year with the signing of a memorandum of agreement between Trade Secretary Manuel Roxas II and Ford Motor vice chair Wayne Booker.

RIGHT TIME TO BUY NISSAN VEHICLES

'High Technology, Great Value' promo on

THERE is no better time than today to buy a Nissan Sentra Exalta, Sentra GX and Serena through Nissan's "High Technology, Great Value" promo. Promising the easiest ways to acquire your favorite Nissan models, the promo also makes available technologically advanced features that set Nissan apart from other brands.

Technologies such as Variable Timing Control (VTC), engine micro-finishing, timing chain driven valve train, Electronic Automatic Transaxle (E-Auto) and Zone Body Concept are as innovative as the acquisition and financing packages available.

Superior new technologies

"In this promo we want to highlight the fact that Nissans have superior innovative technologies that not only enhance performance and safety but also reliability," explains vice president for marketing and sales Vir Diwa.

"Such technologies as robotic welding and painting and the 11-dip paint process extend Nissan's quality and durability, and we are making these available to the market through this promo," he adds.

The promo provides new 0-percent interest terms for the Serena, "just pay the down" for all models and super low down plans for as little as P71,250. These packages make acquiring the Nissan of choice easier. Free chattel mortgage comprehensive insurance comes with selected plans.

Perfect people hauler

Topping the models available in the promo is the Serena Q-RV, known by enthusiasts for its "car-like performance and van-like space."

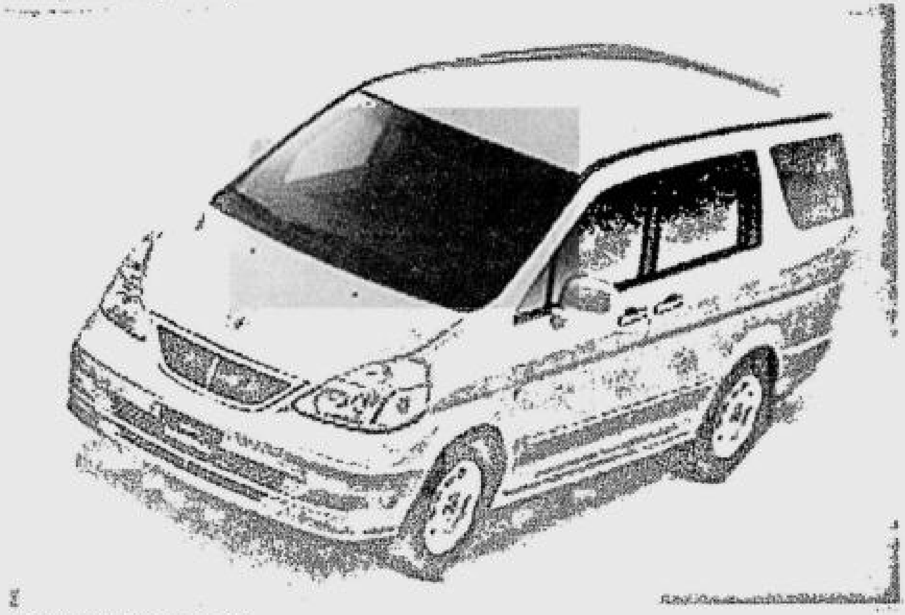
The recreational vehicle accelerates like a car with its 2.0-liter engine inherited from Nissan's sports car lineup. Its fully flexible, fold-flat seats and the large access doors on both sides make it the perfect people hauler.

Excellent sedans

The Sentra Exalta Grandeur and Superio are also included. These excellent sedans, known for their high-performance engines and class-leading multi-link beam suspension system edges out the competition in terms of overall driving experience.

The Nissan Sentra 1.3 GX sets itself apart with the entry-level car with its chromed front grille, well-appointed two-tone interiors, a four-spoke steering wheel, all-fabric seats, a radio-cassette audio system standard in a full-size Exalta body. Flat back body and bumper moldings accent any of the five available luscious colors. Alloy wheels are standard on the automatic transmission variant.

The Nissan promo runs from Feb. 11 to Feb. 28, only at all authorized Nissan dealers nationwide.



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Cleaning made easy with Armor products

ARMOR All recently introduced four new Armor All Wipes products—the easier, faster and more efficient way to protect, clean and shine your vehicle's surfaces. This is Armor All's product for the new millennium, in line with its commitment to keeping your car looking like new.

One-step protection

For protecting your dashboard from fading and cracking, use Armor All Protectant Wipes every time you wash your car. It helps guard against the harmful effects of the ozone by protecting against cracking of your tires and protects against damaging UV rays by preventing fading of your dash.

Armor All Protectant Wipes offers one-step protection to your vehicle. It is great for touch-up jobs, while guarding against UV damage, to keep your car looking like new. It offers a quick and easy way to clean, shine and protect your plastic and vinyl. The wipes are specially formulated to deliver Armor All protection without leaving a greasy residue on your hands.

In one, easy step, wipe clean the surface with Armor All Protectant Wipes to maintain appearance and protection. Repeat if needed. Armor All Protectant is perfect for interior vinyl, plastic and rubber parts of your vehicle.

Armor All Cleaning Wipes cleans dash, vinyl and fabric and helps keep your car looking like new. It's also great for cleaning and protecting against dust.

Streak-free shine

Armor All Cleaning Wipes are the quick and easy way to clean your auto surfaces. The wipes are specially formulated to remove tough, ground-in dirt without drying out, damaging or fading surfaces. They're the one solution to all your cleaning needs.

This is not recommended for glass or painted surfaces. Just wipe the surface clean with Armor All Cleaning Wipes and repeat if necessary. The product is recommended for dashboard, fabric and carpet.

Armor All Glass Wipes meanwhile are the quick and easy way to clean your windows and glass. The wipes are specially formulated to give windows a streak-free shine for maximum visibility. It removes film and grime on glass while offering one-step glass cleaning, helping keep your windows looking like new. It is also great for getting rid of those pesky fingerprint marks.

Just wipe the glass surface clean with Armor All Glass Wipes and repeat until streak-free. Let the surface dry. It's good for all windows including factory-tinted windows because they're ammonia-free (unlike many household glass cleaners).

Easiest solution

Armor All Leather Wipes offers the easiest solution to cleaning leather parts of your vehicle. In one quick easy wipe, it safely cleans and protects against spills, dirt and stains on leather surfaces to keep your leather looking like new.

This product is perfect for leather seats, leather paneling and leather dash. Just wipe the automotive leather surface with Armor All Leather Wipe to clean, protect and maintain the appearance and repeat if needed.

Armor All Wipes products combine the same great Armor All products you are used to in a more easy-to-use format. They contain the same advanced cleaning and protecting agents as you will find in the full line of Armor All products.

Armor All products, since 1962, have been popular among motorists worldwide because of their original "miracle" formula that protects rubber, plastic and vinyl surfaces from UV radiation and ozone.

New Armor All Wipes are available at major auto outlet chains.

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Each week, a viewer's question related to cars and motoring gets answered on Auto Extreme. You can get a hard copy every Thursday in the Motoring section of the Philippine Daily Inquirer.

How do airbags work?
—Vine Reyes of Valenzuela City

THE AIRBAG works as a barrier between you and the inner compartment of your vehicle in case of a collision. The bag itself is made of a thin, nylon fabric that is folded into the steering wheel, dashboard, seat or door.

The airbag's inflation system is similar to that of a solid rocket booster. The system ignites a solid propellant which burns extremely fast to create a huge volume of gas to inflate the bag. To be more specific, the inflation system triggers a chemical reaction between sodium azide and potassium nitrate to produce large amounts of nitrogen gas to inflate the airbag.

The airbag literally bursts from its storage site at up to 322 kph—faster than the blink of an eye! A second later, the gas quickly dissipates through tiny holes in the bag allowing you to move.

What triggers an airbag to inflate? There are sensors in front of your vehicle that detect a collision. Inflation happens when there is a collision force equal to running into a brick wall at 16 to 24 kph. The sensor then sends a signal to the canister containing the propellant and detonates the igniter compound. What is amazing is that from the time the sensors detect the collision to the time the airbag is fully inflated takes only 30 milliseconds. Fifty milliseconds after the accident, that's when the car's occupant hits the airbag, thus absorbing the impact and protecting him from injury.

But remember, airbags work in conjunction with seatbelts for maximum protection. When combined with the proper use of a seatbelt, airbags reduce the risk for serious head injuries by up to 75 percent compared to only 38 percent with seatbelts alone.

So buckle up!

When. . .

From page B11

More Metro Trens, please?

* * *

We now go to the colorums (buses without government permits to ply the city).

Why do we have colorums in the first place?

If you don't know the answer, then you know nothing about how this government works—or has been working for decades.

Of course, colorums exist because of graft and corruption. From the highest official down to the enforcers of traffic laws, they are all guilty of said crime.

* * *

Some quarters say colorums contribute much to the traffic snarls in the metropolis. And these colorums are mostly buses, many of them the smoke-belching variety yet.

I agree.

Most of them roam Edsa and Commonwealth Avenue at night so that they could ply their illegal trade under the cover of darkness, and when so-called "traffic enforcers" have left their posts and have headed for home.

* * *

By its very name itself, colorum is fake. Its owner is a thief as he/she does not pay taxes.

Parenthetically, government officials who allow the operation of colorums are thieves, too. For, without their consent, willingly or otherwise, colorums can't exist at all.

The police are also to blame, particularly those motorcycle cops who condone the presence of colorums for "one thousand reasons" or more.

So, is Bayani Fernando, the MMDA chief, really a hero because of his "color-coding" scheme against the public utility vehicles?

In a sense, yes. If Fernando doesn't back down in this fight, then I'll consider him a bigger hero than Nameless, the star in the film "Hero."

* * *

QUOTE ME. Most of the time, the only winner during a traffic argument is Mr. T a.k.a. Mr. Trouble.

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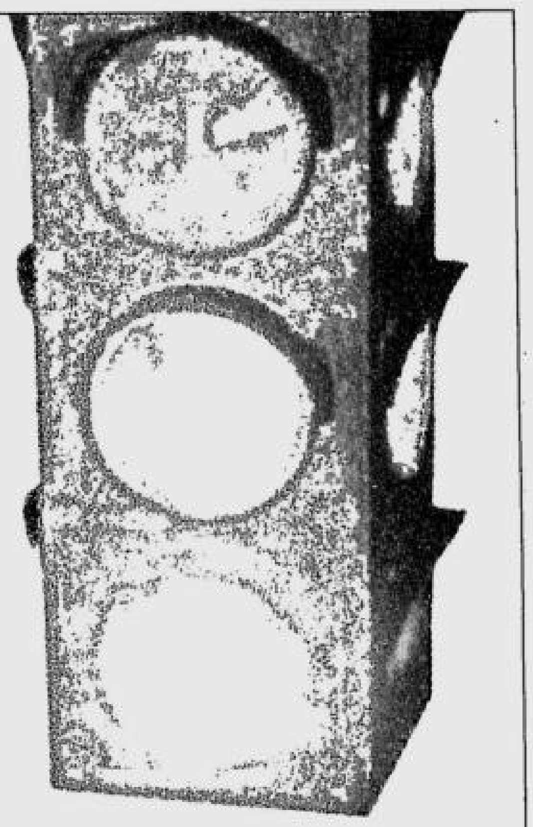

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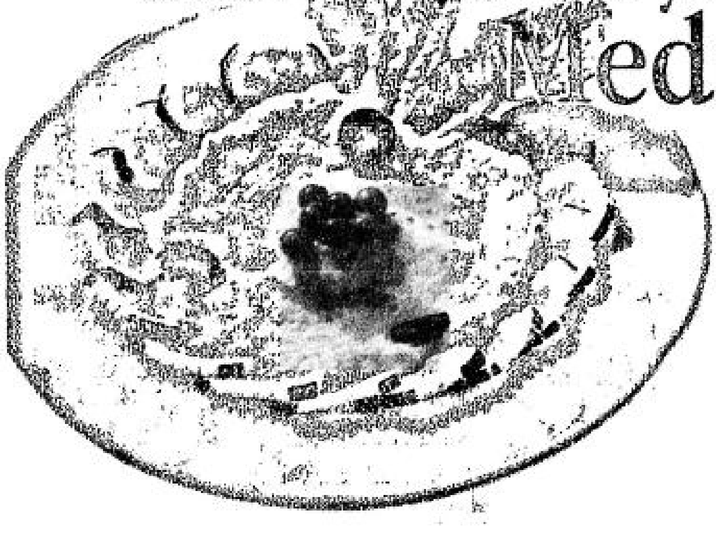
LIFESTYLE

Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

East is eden if you're eating Mediterranean



Story on page C2

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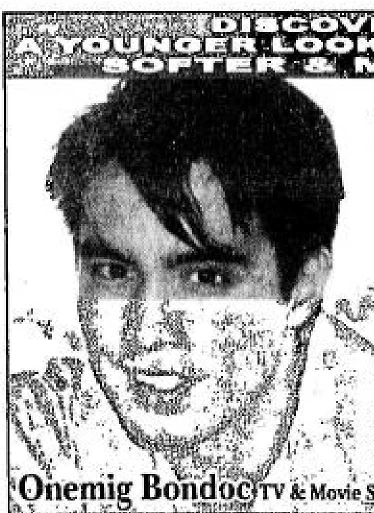

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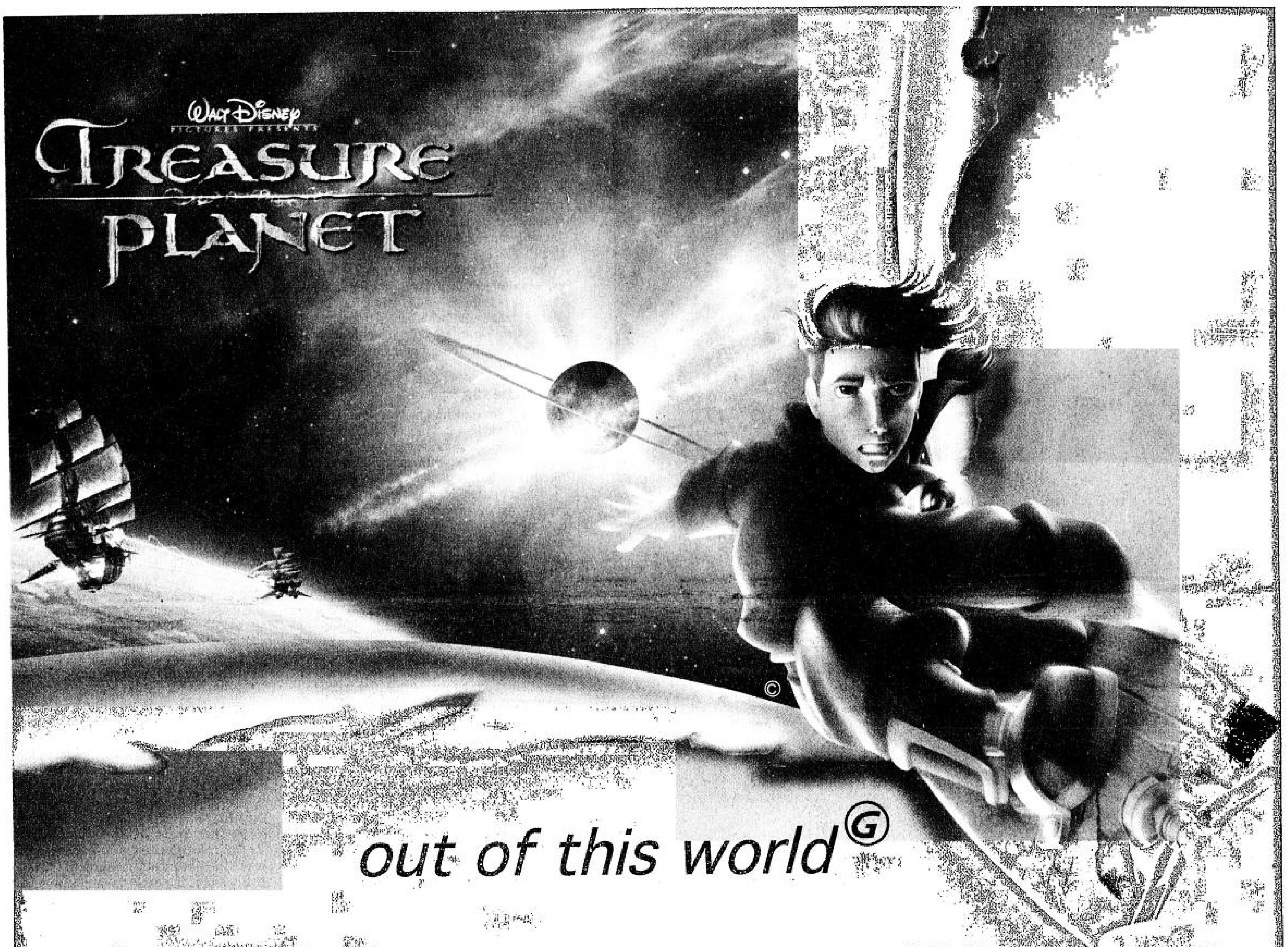

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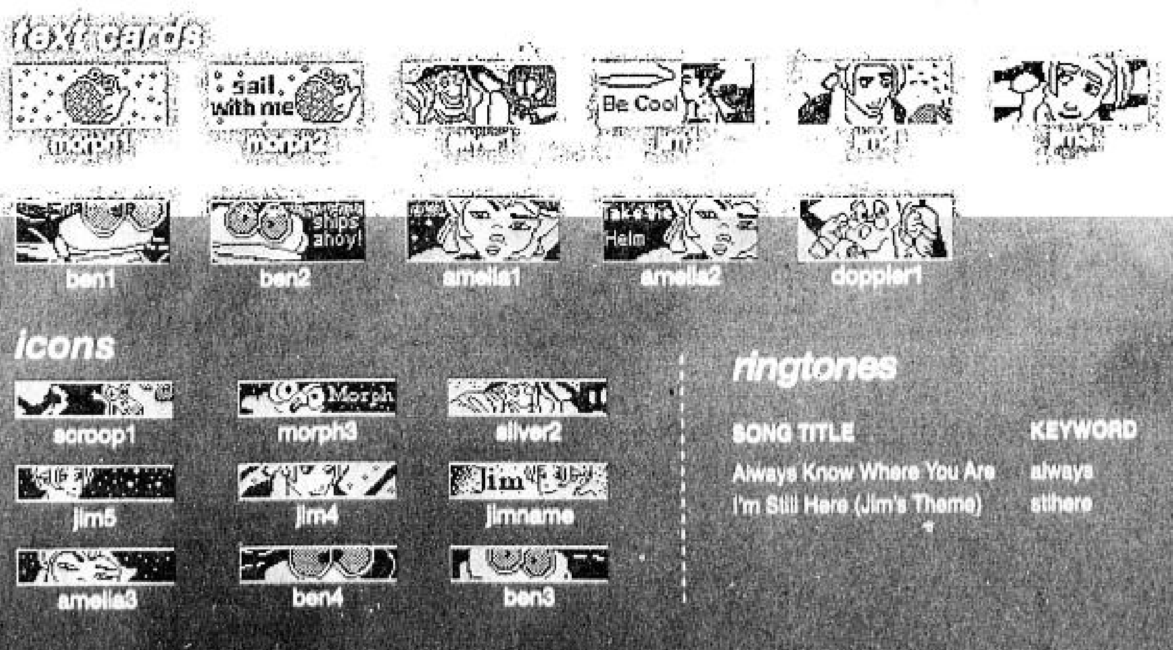

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East is eden, if you're eating *Mediterranean*

PEPPERED Fettuccini

Chef Martin Kohler says goodbye to Holiday Inn Manila's kitchen scene with a food festival that features the lesser known cuisines of Greece, Turkey, Lebanon, Egypt and Syria plus the popular pastas of Italy and Spain

MARTIN Kohler, Holiday Inn Manila's outgoing executive chef

By Alex Y. Vergara

FOR his swan song at the Holiday Inn Manila, outgoing executive chef Martin Kohler has whipped up a Mediterranean food festival that highlights the culinary delights not just of Italy and Spain, but also of countries further to the east, such as Greece, Turkey, Lebanon, Egypt and Syria.

The food fest is ongoing until tomorrow at the Rotisserie, the hotel's fine-dining restaurant on the third floor.

After working for seven years at the Holiday Inn Manila, Kohler has recently joined the Holiday Inn Clark as food and beverage manager.

The Mediterranean food fest is his last project for the hotel's Manila property, so he has taken time off from his duties in Clark to personally oversee it. French-Canadian Maurice Teoret is the Holiday Inn Manila's new executive chef.

"Everybody has been featuring pasta dishes," says Kohler. "I felt it was time for us to feature dishes from lesser known regions of the Mediterranean. But whether it's from the east or from the west, Mediterranean food is all about the use of fresh ingredients, especially from the sea."

From the sea

The Mediterranean's marine bounty is immediately evident in Kohler's Mediterranean Crustade Bisque, a deep-orange, seafood-based soup served with ricotta cheese and foccacia bread crisp.

"The soup isn't exactly Mediterranean, but it's inspired by it," says Kohler. "It derives its flavor from various shellfish, and its red-orangey color is not from tomatoes but from shells of fresh lobsters."

One of Kohler's featured entrées, Hammour Kamonjak, however, is authentic Lebanese. He cooked the fish dish in bell pepper, tomatoes and olive oil, and flavored it with a potent combination of onions, garlic, coriander leaves and pine nuts. The hammour's soft, flavorful texture is similar to that of the lapu-lapu's, except that the former is found only in the waters of the Mediterranean.

"We had to import at least 50 kilos of hammour from the Mediterranean," says Kohler. "Our lamb meat, however, has been sourced from New Zealand."

Just dip it

The food fest also features kebabs, various meat dishes and grilled items prepared the Middle Eastern way. Yes, there are also pasta dishes aplenty, cooked either Italian- or Spanish-style. One can never go wrong, says Kohler, with the seafood lasagna flavored with Spanish saffron or the Italian pepper linguini topped with Gorgonzola cheese.

The more adventurous may start their meals with creamy Middle-Eastern dips such as the yellowish hommus and the white babaganoush. (*See recipes on page C3*)

The hommus got its yellowish color from a mixture of chickpeas, lemon juice and sesame oil. Kohler further enhanced its flavor by adding salt, garlic and extra virgin olive oil to the mix. He topped the dip with pine nuts and sautéed beef before garnishing it with sliced cucumbers.

The babaganoush is made primarily of flame-grilled eggplant and flavored with lemon juice, olive oil, tahini, salt and garlic, and topped with several kernels of pomegranate. Both dips, says Kohler, are ideal for pita bread.

"Guests don't have to dine on a full Lebanese spread," he adds. "We have provided diners with a wide range of options. I've taken some of the Mediterranean's classic dishes in order to come up with an assortment that best represents the region."

The festival is part of Fly Ace Corporation's Mediterranean Getaway Club, an ongoing program that aims to expose food lovers to the flavors and textures of that region. Fly Ace is the exclusive distributor of Pietro Coricelli olive oil, Federici pasta, Doña Maria olives and capers, and Doña Elena's Portuguese sardines and Spanish anchovies.

E-mail the author avergara@inquirer.com.ph

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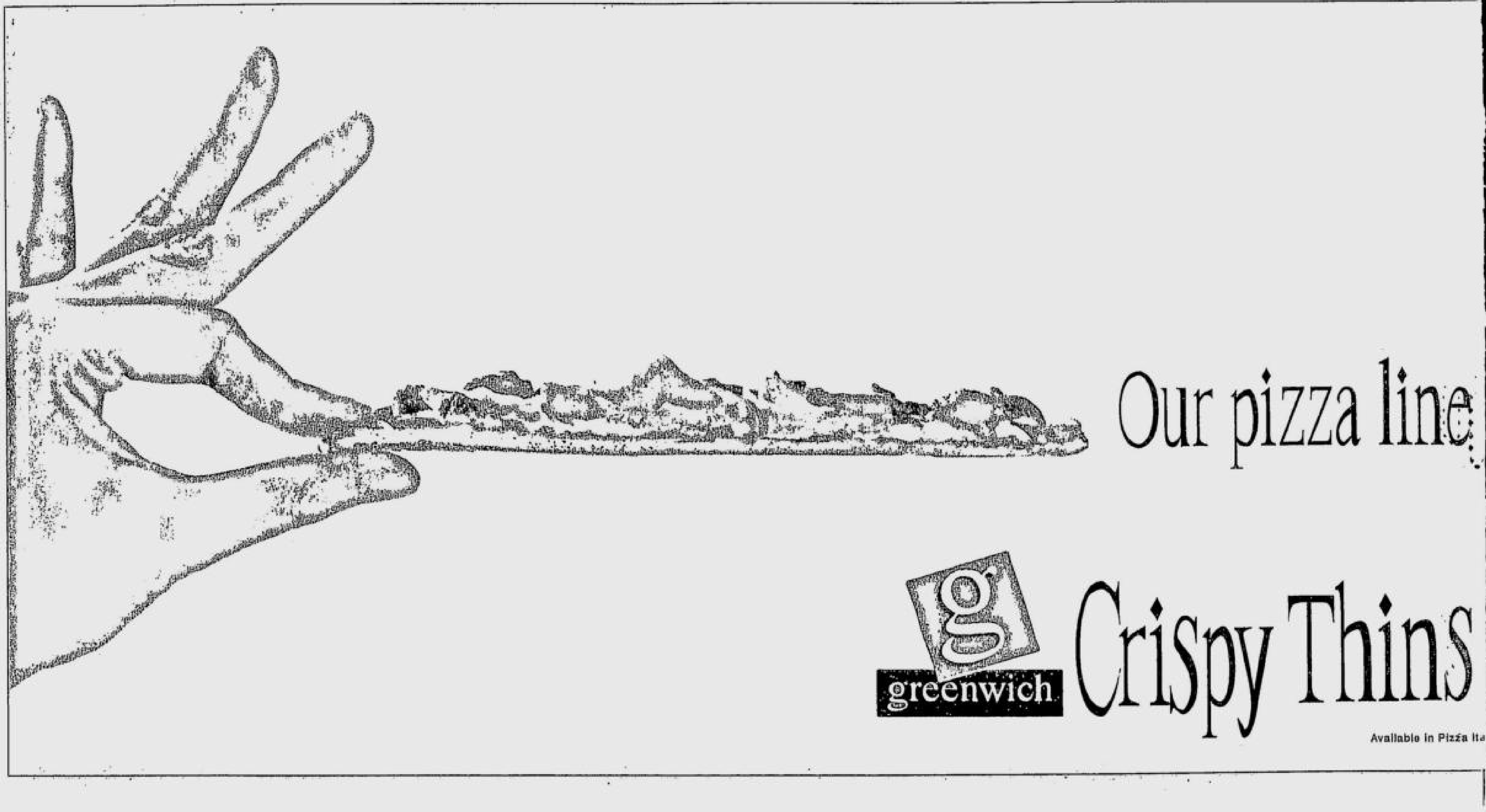

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MMUS bin Lachme, d Kibbe Croquettes ved with traditional Pita ad and Smoked Eggplant aganoush with negranate

ATHENS Salad

Babaganoush with Pomegranate

Note: The secret to good babaganoush is the smoky flavor of flame-grilled eggplant.

Try not to shortcut this method if you can.

¼ kg eggplant
¼ c lemon juice
5 tsp tahini
2 cloves of garlic
1 tsp salt
½ pc pomegranate
Pietro Coricelli Pure Olive Oil

Remove green stems from eggplant and grill on an open flame until tender.

Scrape off the burned skin and allow flesh to cool.

Mash together the eggplant, tahini, salt, lemon juice and garlic with a fork until a slightly lumpy paste is formed.

Refrigerate for one hour.

Carefully peel the pomegranate and remove ¼ c of the red kernels, careful to keep the juice intact.

Lightly sprinkle Pietro Coricelli Pure Olive Oil on the babaganoush, then sprinkle on the pomegranate kernels and serve. (Serves 4)

Mezzeh Kohler: This variety plate is executive chef Martin Kohler's gourmet interpretation of a fine Middle-Eastern delicacy. It consists of three of the most delicious morsels ever to dampen your pita.

Note: Although we are led to believe that extra virgin olive oil is always the best choice, for Mezzeh ingredients, purified olive oil is better. This is because extra virgin imparts a flavor to food that, in this case, interferes with how the dish should actually taste. What we want is the rich texture imparted by olive oil without a distinct flavor. For this purpose, Pietro Coricelli's purified olive oil is perfect.

Hommus bin Lachme

1-1 ½ c dried chickpeas (garbanzo beans)
2 tbsp salt
3/4 c tahini
½ c lemon juice
Pietro Coricelli Pure Olive Oil
Pine nuts
8 ounces of tenderloin sliced into short, narrow strips
Salt
Ice water

Soak beans overnight, boil at medium until tender, drain and allow to cool. Either mash the beans manually or puree them in the food processor, slowly adding the tahini until a thick paste is formed. Stir in the lemon juice. Add salt to taste. Stir in ice water until a somewhat thick, but creamy smooth consistency is achieved. Refrigerate in serving bowl for 1 hour.

Garnishing:

Add a pinch of salt to beef and saute with 1 tbsp of Pietro Coricelli Pure Olive Oil and ¼ c of pine nuts until meat is completely cooked. Remove hommus from refrigerator. Drizzle Pietro Coricelli Pure Olive Oil, lightly over the top (this is an important step since the olive oil imparts a rich mouth feel to the hommus but be careful not to overdo it). Arrange sauteed beef strips and pine nuts on top and serve. (Serves 4)

Kibbe Croquettes filled with beef and cheese

1 leg of lamb

Note: Have your butcher trim the fat, remove the meat from the bone and have it minced or ground twice.

4½ c of burghol (cracked wheat)
3 medium onions
1 medium red bell pepper
1 tsp salt
Freshly ground pepper
1 dash all spice
1 dash cumin
1 dash oregano
1 dash chopped mint
¼ tsp cinnamon
Pietro Coricelli's Cuoci Oliva (Olive Oil for Frying)

Kibbe Filling:

1 block of feta cheese, crumbled
2 kg onions, chopped
1 kg ground beef
100 g of pine nuts
Salt and pepper

Saute the onions and ground beef until golden brown, add the pine nuts and season to taste.

Wash the burghol thoroughly and then soak it well. Drain by taking out handfuls and squeezing the water out. Chop the onions, pepper and spices in the food processor, add the ground lamb and blend together. Add the burghol and blend again into a lumpy mixture. Take a plum-sized handful of the kibbe dough and form it into a cup.

Fill cup with meat filling and cheese and pinch shut. Make all of the dumplings and refrigerate for at least 1 hour. Deep fry kibbe at medium heat in Cuoci Oliva (olive oil for frying). Serve hot. (Serves 4)

Athens Salad

Note: This recipe requires some ingredients to be marinated overnight.

1 ½ c cucumber, peeled and cut into 1 cm. (approximate) cubes
12 pcs mini tomatoes, organic, whole, with stems removed
1 small to medium-size yellow onion, chopped
¾ c bell pepper (red or yellow) sliced into small strips
100 g of feta cheese cut into 1 cm cubes
16 pcs Doña Maria black olives
1 medium size head of romaine lettuce with the outer leaves removed
Pietro Coricelli Garlic Chili Oil
Pietro Coricelli Extra Virgin Olive Oil
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
5 leaves of fresh basil, chopped
Juice from 1 lemon

Pita bread croutons: see method below.

With a fork, poke lines of perforating holes in pita forming a grid of 2 cm squares. Toast pita bread directly on metal rack at medium heat for 15-20 minutes at medium heat or until crisp, and then break up roughly along perforating lines.

Marinating:

In two separate plastic sandwich bags, place the black olives and the feta cheese cubes. In the olive bag, place the chopped basil. In each bag, place 2-3 tbsp of Pietro Coricelli Garlic Chili Olive Oil. Close the bags and shake them moderately to coat the contents in oil. Refrigerate overnight. Wash all fresh vegetables before using.

Assembling the salad:

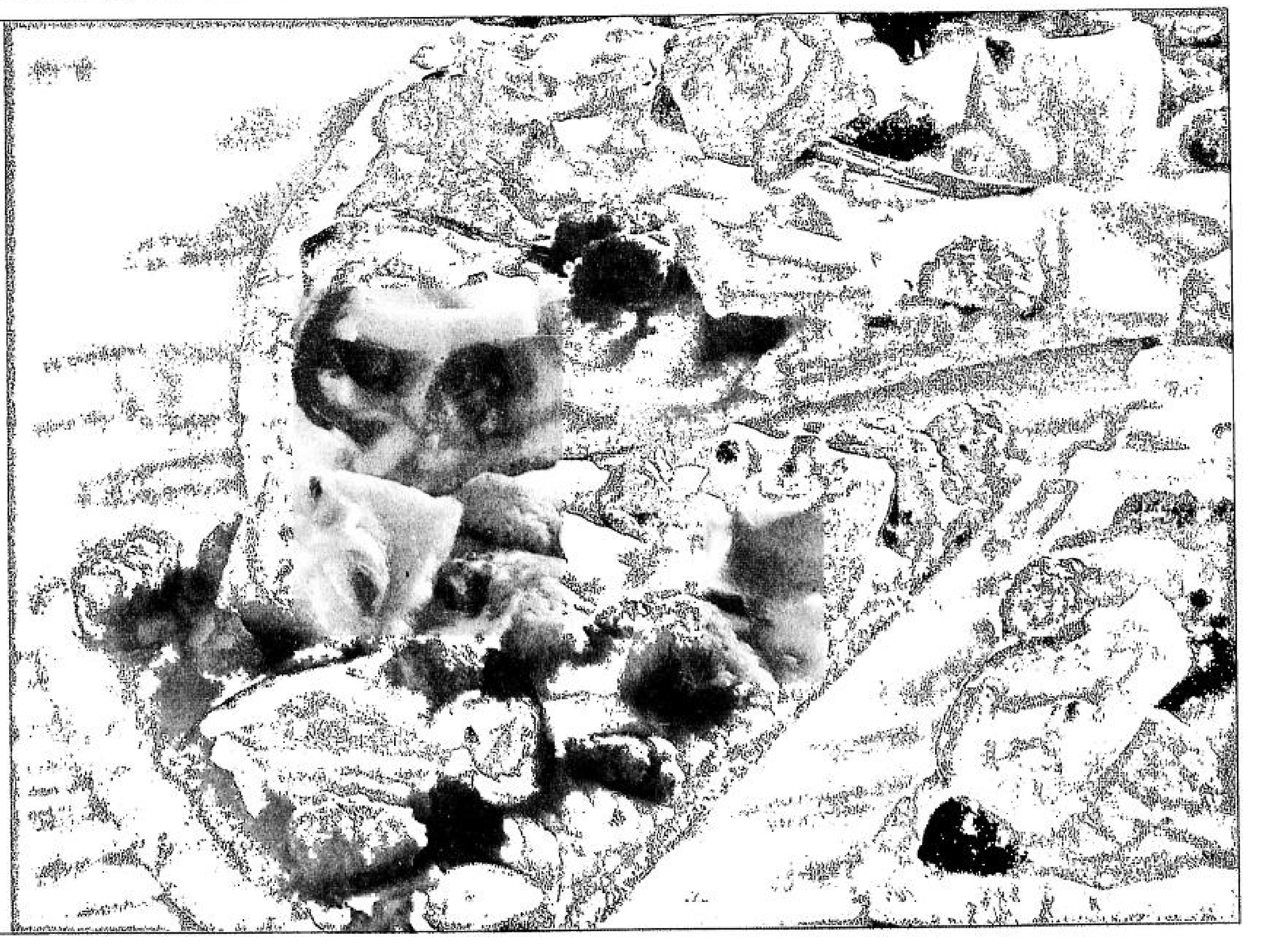
In a large bowl, mix the tomatoes, peppers, onions, a pinch of salt and 2 tablespoons of Pietro Coricelli Extra Virgin Olive Oil and the lemon juice. Next, add fresh romaine lettuce, torn or cut into bite-sized pieces, mix gently. (Serves 4)

Peppered Fettuccini

150 g Federici Pasta Donna Amelia Fettuccini
40 g Gorgonzola cheese
80 ml cream
60 g fresh tuna
¼ c Doña Elena White Wine
½ c parmesan cheese, grated
¼ c chopped shallots
3 tbsp Pietro Coricelli Purified Olive Oil
Salt
4 tbsp crushed black pepper

Boil the pasta al dente and drain, follow the package directions and use plenty of water to avoid sticky noodles. In a wok or medium-sized pot, sauté the chopped shallots and tuna in olive oil at low heat until shallots start to sweat and then add the Gorgonzola cheese. Top with the wine and bring to a low simmer for 10 minutes to reduce the liquid slightly.

Add the fresh cream and crushed black pepper, bring back to a low simmer then turn off the heat. Add the pasta and mix thoroughly. Serve immediately with grated parmesan on the side. (Serves 4 side dishes or 2 main dishes)



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DINING OUT

AT KULINARYA Kitchen, flavors from different cultures meet on one's plate. The place is known for its spicy gambas on herb pasta, pizzas, lamb rack with mushroom ragout crepe pouch, onion confit, Asian rice pilaf and crab and mango salad. But there are more items on the menu to try now, like the Italian sausage pasta. Kulinarya is at the basement of the Power Plant Mall (near Office Warehouse), Makati City. Call 898-1738.

KAMAYAN showcases "Bagong Tuklas... Bagong Sarap... Mga Dilag ng Dagat." This buffet offers seafood dishes like Steamed Shellfish, Kamayan Fishballs, Inihaw Na Pusit and Binalot Na Alimasag. The festival is ongoing until April at Kamayan branches in SM Megamall, Glorietta 3, Alabang Town Center, Edsa, West Avenue, Pasay Road and Padre Faura. Call 532-3004.

STORE Super offers food from different countries, like Vietnamese rice stick noodles topped with a peppery spring roll, grilled Saigon pork chop and Shanghai crispy pork sausage. Store Super is located on the G/L Greenbelt 3, Ayala Center.

MACAU Restaurant presents genuine Macanese dishes like deep-fried baby pigeon, spicy African chicken and roasted Portuguese chicken. Other Macau-style dishes include crabs, salmon head, noodles with meat and seafood, sauteed shrimp, stir-fried chicken or sliced beef, satay beef or black pepper beef. Macau is located in Glorietta 4, Makati, and Eastwood, QC.

KSP Grill combines the exotic flavors of Asian cuisine in Pandan Spareribs, Todd Man-ok, Maya-maya in Ginger Sauce, Inaligihang Mangga, Tamanpipi Ensalada, Pinasingawang Talakitok, Chicken Blak-Dyak, Cocido Soup, Steamed Tanigue, Twice-cooked Pork, Beef Red Curry and Hito sa Miso. KSP Grill is located at 88 Meralco Ave. corner Dona Julia Vargas St., Ortigas Center, Pasig City.

CITY Garden Hotel Makati's Roofdeck Bar and Grill offers sushi, tempura and Beef Mongolian at reasonable prices. The promo will be from Feb. 11 to March 31. Call 899-1111.

FISHING Village Restaurant offers "Buy 1 Take 1 Part II" promo that features imported Yellow Fish, Steamed Ancient Style and Fried Pigeon. Dine-in customers who order either of these specialties get a gift certificate for the same item, which they can use in their next dine-in visit. Fishing Village Restaurant is at the corner of Roxas Boulevard and Padre Faura in Ermita, Manila. Call 536-8838 or 536-1916.

KAISEKI at The Fort in Global City offers Sukiyaki, Gyoza, Maki and Sushi. It also features Krazy Maki, Shrimp Tempura, Soba Noodles, Cha Soba, Steamed Chicken Roll and desserts. Call 889-1005/0520.

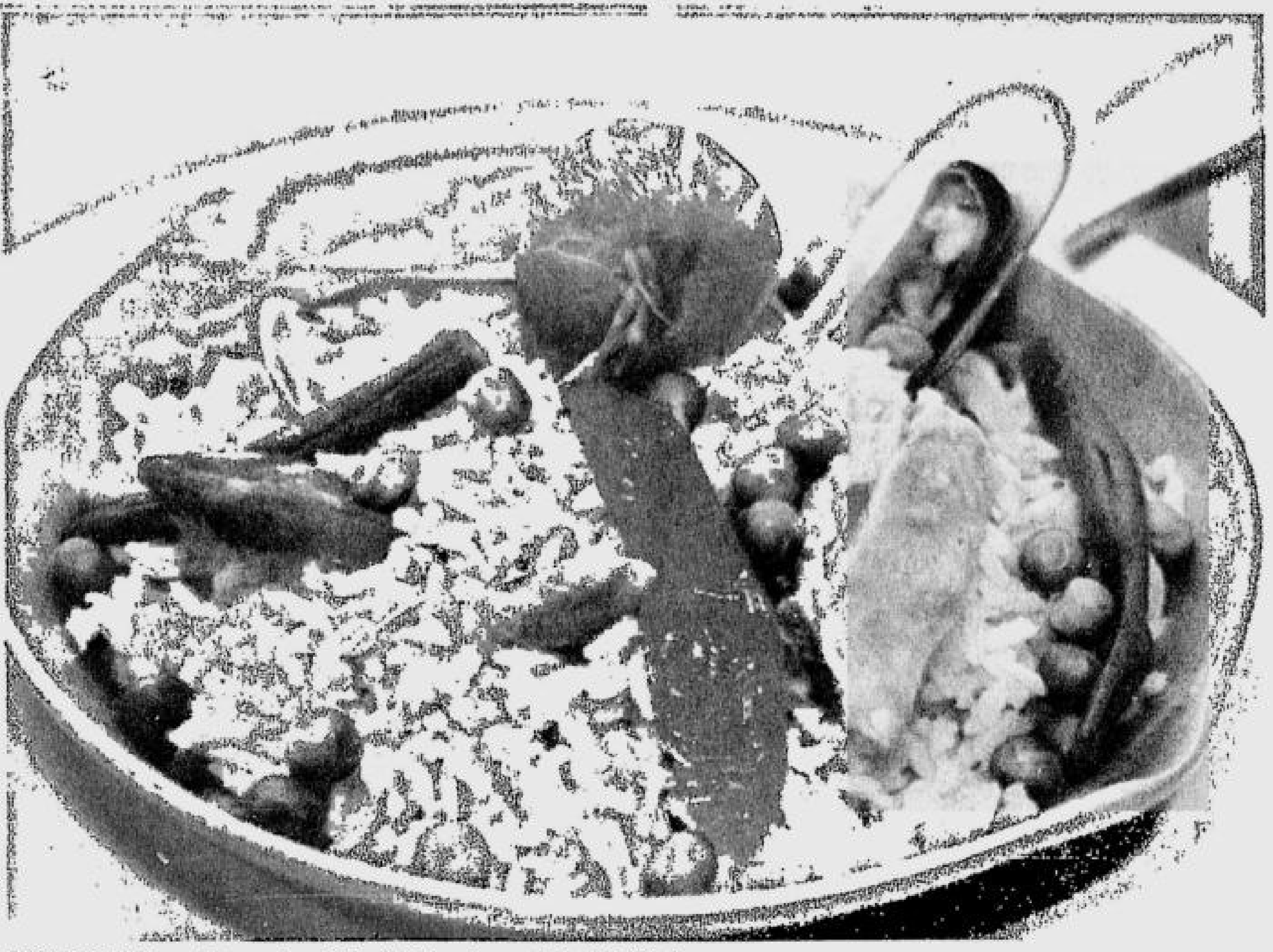
STRUAN and Tang's on the fourth level of Shangri-La Plaza Mall offers dim sum, scones with Devon cream, hot and cold teas with liquor or spices. Call 687-1801.

MARIO'S Kitchen offers Spanish dishes like the Lengua con Setas, Callos Madrileña, Paellitas (petite version of Paella Valenciana), and other main courses like the T-Bone Steak, Bangus Belly à la Pobre, Beef Caldereta and Hot Pot (Beef and Mushroom topped with Mashed Potato and Cheese). Mario's also offers pastas, sandwiches, and desserts. On its anniversary month, Mario's Kitchen in Robinsons Galleria and Robinsons Place Ermita offers a special promo that will entitle diners to a free dessert for every P250 food purchase or a free dish for every P600 food purchase. Both are redeemable on the next visit. Call 633-5995 or 302-0195.

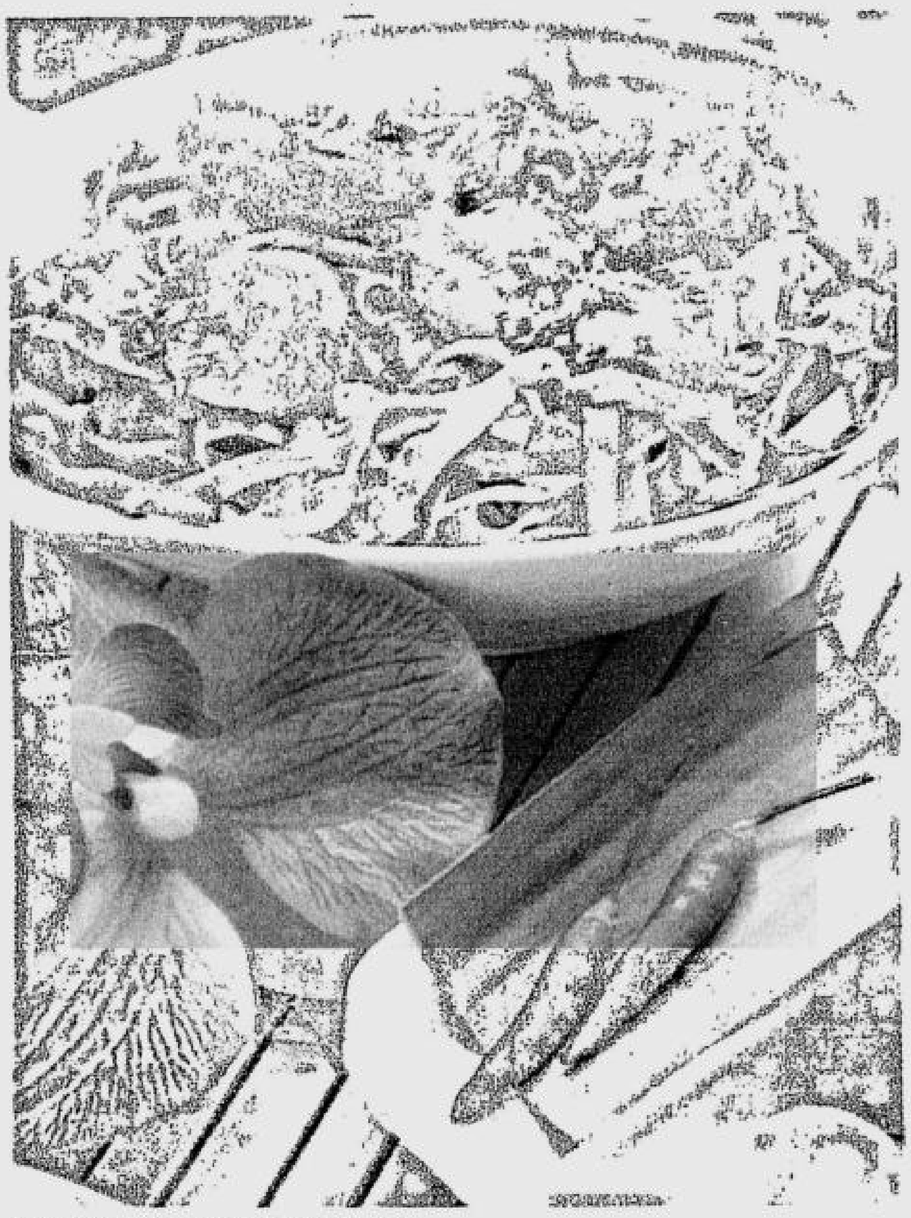
THIEN Duong, Dusit Hotel Nikko's Vietnamese Restaurant, is featuring for the month of February "Oodles of Noodles," a create-your-own noodle dish where guests can choose from a wide array of noodles and toppings and have them served stir-fried, crispy or as soup. Call 867-3333.

THE SULO Hotel's Sushi Bar and Teppanyaki Japanese Restaurant features blue marlin, cod fish, salmon, shrimp and US black Angus beef. There are combo specials served with appetizer, salad, miso soup, fried rice, vegetables and dessert. Call 924-5051 to -71.

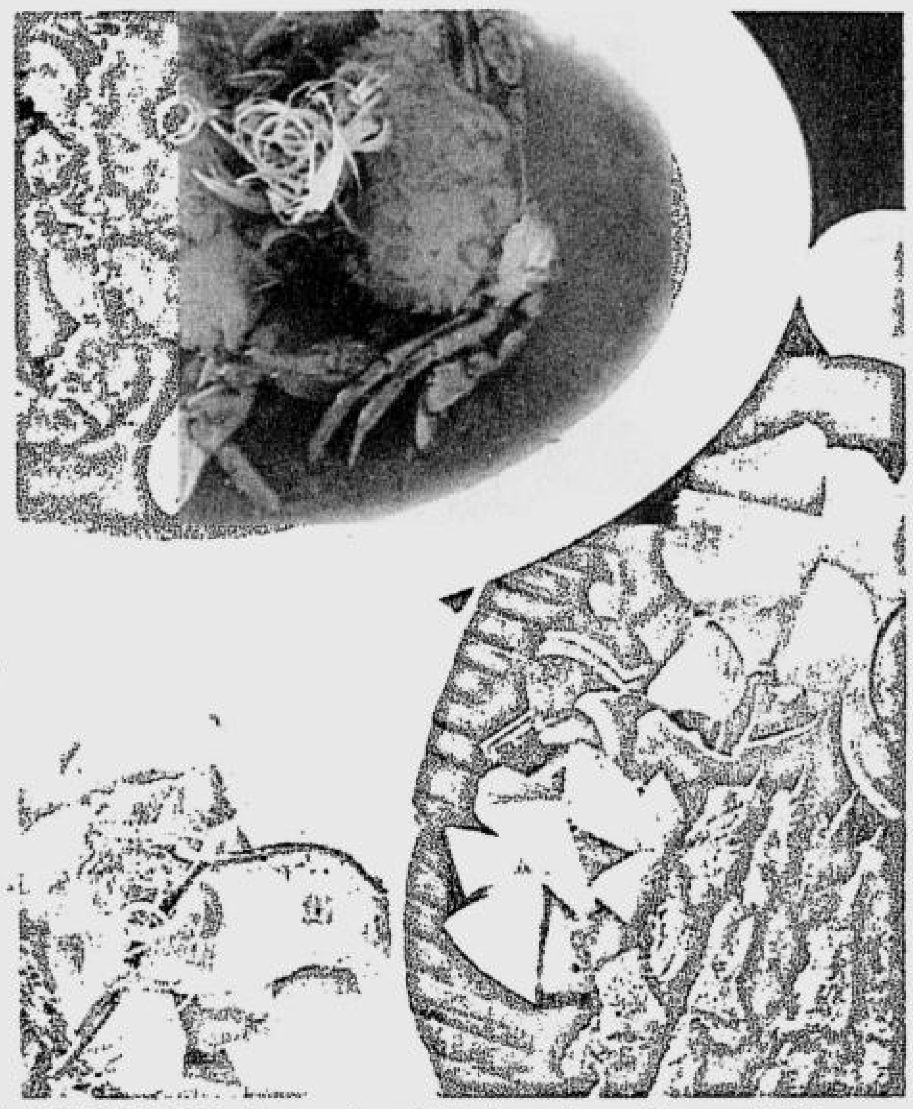
ASIDE from seafood pasta, eggplant lasagna and steamed shrimp, Cafe Papemelroti now offers garden and cheese pizzas. Cafe Papemelroti is located at 91 Roces Ave., QC. Call 372-6799.



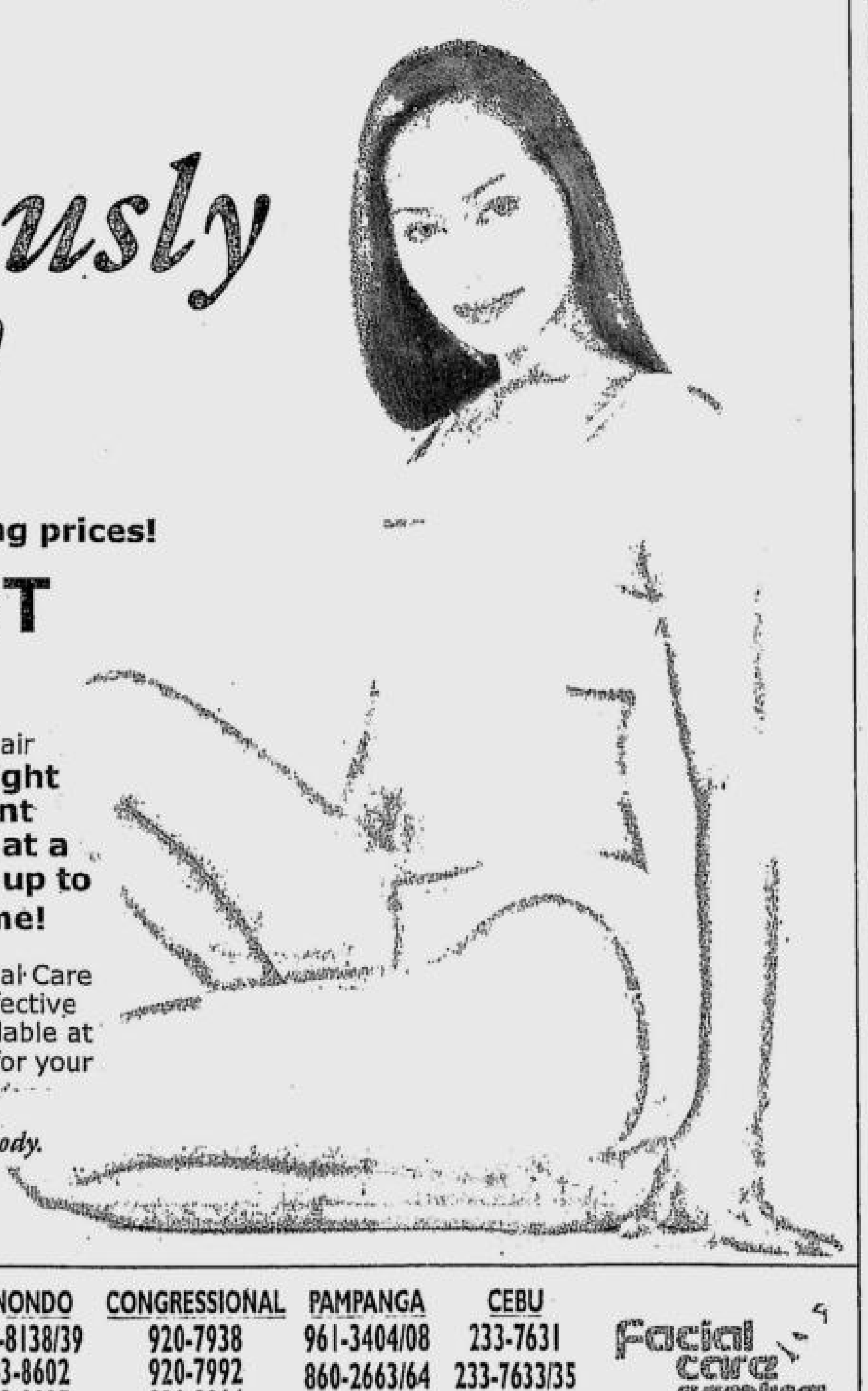
PAELLITAS, the petite version of Paella Valenciana, at Mario's Kitchen



CHAR Kway Tsao at Stuan and Tang's



THE BELLEVUE Manila presents specialties like pork sparerib soup with Chinese herb served in a clay pot with fragrant rice; assorted satay or grilled skewers of chicken, beef and pork garnished with rice pudding, cucumber, onion and spicy peanut sauce; freshwater crab in spicy chili sauce served with jasmine rice; and double-boiled beef gravy with rice sheet noodles, shredded bean sprouts and coriander leaf.



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Free baking and cake decorating demo

PEOTRACO Industries will showcase the most dynamic bakers and cake decorators in the country in a series of free demonstrations to be held at the Bakery Fair trade show at the World Trade Center from Feb. 27 to March 1.

The schedule of the demos are as follows: Feb. 27, 10:30 a.m.-12 nn (stage), Everything Chocolate by Aurelia Yap and Dorothy Ferreria of Dorothy's Cooking School; 2-4 p.m., Ways with Choux Paste by Ferreria at the Peotraco booth; 5-6 p.m., Bars by Yap of Aureli's Bakeshop, also at the Peotraco booth.

Ferreria will be available the whole day to sign her cookbooks, which will be available for sale at the same booth.

Feb. 28, 10 a.m.-12 nn (stage), Cold Porcelain as an Alternative to Gumpaste Flowers by CCS Bakeshop's Avelina Florendo, with Penk Cheng of Pastry Bin to demonstrate Trends in Fondant.

Florendo will be available after the demo to sign her cookbooks, which will be available at the Peotraco booth; 2-4 p.m., Cakes for Fondant by Melissa Lim of Kitchenworks and Cakeworld (Peotraco booth); 5-6 p.m., Elegant Roses in Royal Icing by Lita Bernales (Peotraco booth).

March 1, 10 a.m.-12 nn, Gum Paste Flowers by Emelita Galang and daughter Encar of Galang Culinary Arts Studio in Angeles, Pampanga (stage); 2-4 p.m., Specialty Breads by Willy Bejar of Asian Baking Institute (Peotraco booth); 5-6 p.m, Pastel—Camiguin's Pride by Edgar Dychauco of Pots and Pans Bakeshop in Cagayan de Oro City (Peotraco booth).

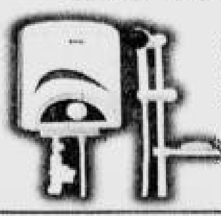
All events will be hosted by pastry chef Dennis Hipolito and Edgar Dychauco. Call Lorrie at 365-8281.

For feedback, text us at (0919)880-33-54 or email us at pr_lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

LIFESTYLE

What's (un)cooking in the farm kitchen?

Story on page D2



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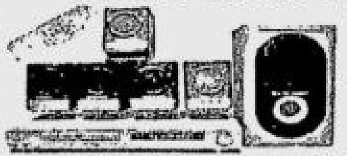

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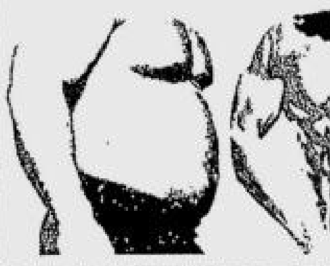

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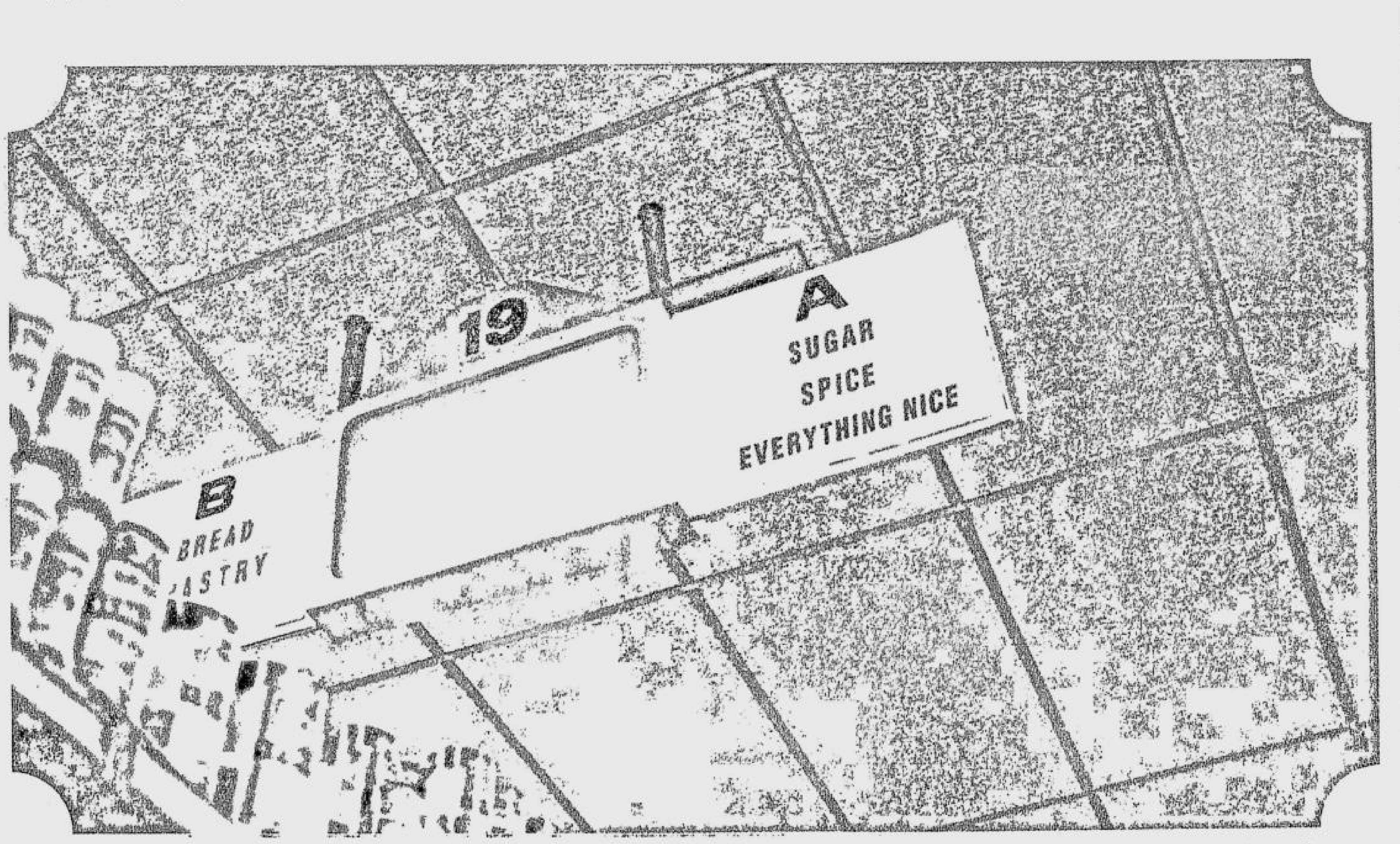

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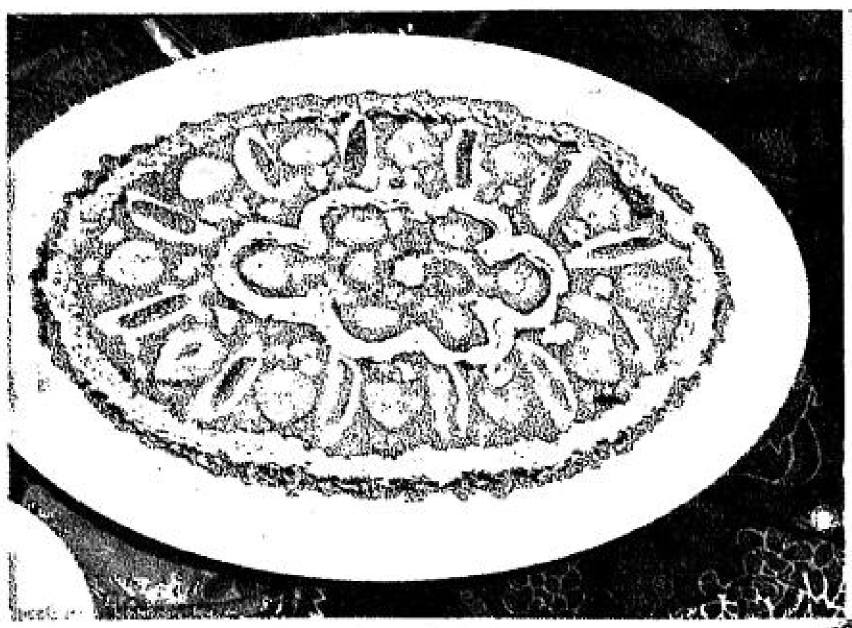


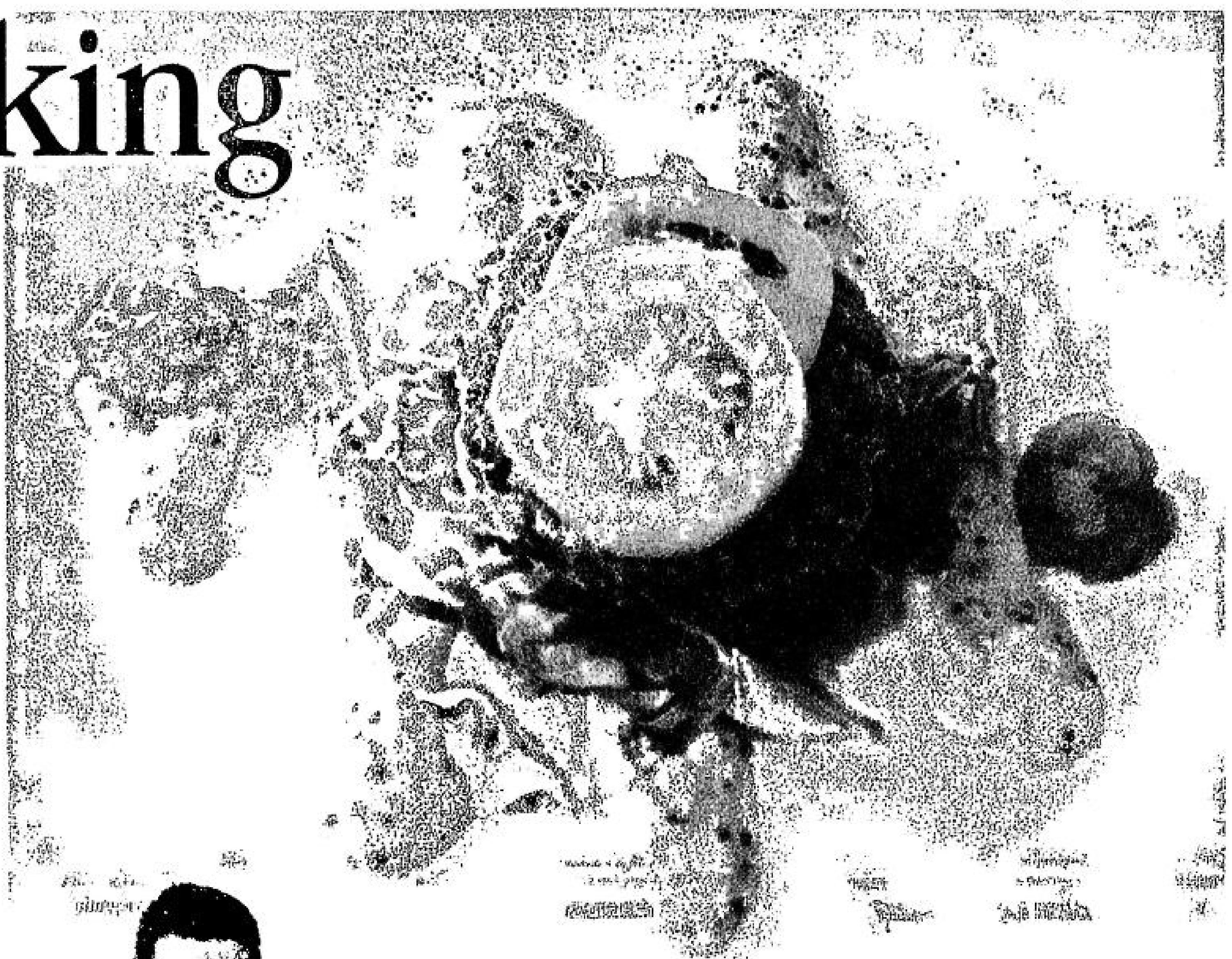
LUSCIOUS mango-strawberry dream pie for dessert at the international salad bar for dinner. Who says health food is bland and boring?

85/15 version of non-dairy banana split ice cream is a colorful delight, naturally.

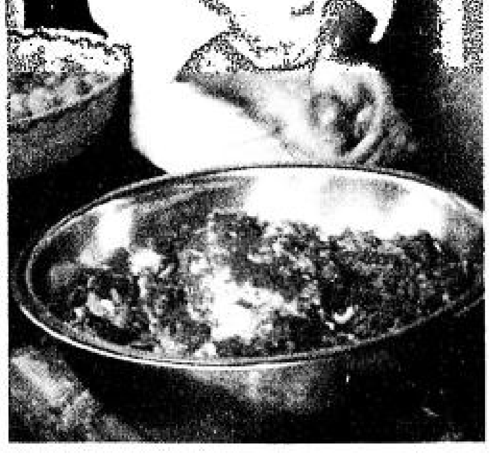
ASIAN Medley with Vegetable White Rice and Chili Cashews. Would you believe its not really rice but *singkamas* and almond nuts?

What's (un)cooking in the farm kitchen?

Text and photos by Lynett A. Villariba



NOT YOUR USUAL BURGER. Chef Sarno (left) hand-tosses choice herbs and spices into ground soaked cashew nuts and adds in diced mushrooms marinated in olive oil and *nama shoyu* (organic soy souce) to make this nutburger.



The two expert chefs at the 85/15 Gourmet Cuisine Restaurant of The Farm at San Benito hardly ever use the stove

YOU are in for a culinary adventure at the 85/15 Gourmet Cuisine Restaurant of The Farm at San Benito in Lipa, Batangas. The numbers refer to the proportion of raw to cooked plant foods the restaurant maintains.

And now please lower your eyebrows while we show you around the kitchen.

Tools of freshness

Inconspicuous in one corner, the stove is the least used tool in the remarkably calm and airy kitchen. Sliced coconut meats in special dehydrators become crispy crackers still high in minerals. High-speed blenders churn out refreshing fruit slushes and nutritious muesli. Food processors make vibrant carrot-and-squash salads rich in cancer-fighting antioxidants. Zucchinis go through a saladacco spiral slicer to make low-carbo "pasta" wraps.

"Milk" and "cream" mean almond or cashew nuts soaked in water and cold-pressed coconut meat. Cheese is cultured not from animal source but with fermented berry juice, and hand-mixed with not just any salt, but unpolluted sea salt.

The chefs hardly touch the stove. It is used for warming blended soups and transition entrées just enough to retain the live food enzymes and take the joy into digesting the living energy that sustains health.

What is going on is more like a trip to another planet where there is no heady whiff of *adobo*, no odors of grease, seared meat and food additives so typical of local kitchens. Flour, sugar and salt are unrefined and mineralized by nature. Herbs and spices, vegetables and fruits are grown—and seeds sprouted—in organic gardens. There is no toxic threat to the clean air.

New paradigm

Welcome to a new taste paradigm, a nutrition trend that is catching on as a common-sense fix for civilization's systems breakdown: raw, organic, vegan and nothing heated over 42°.

It doesn't take much to fuel a living food preparation packed with essential enzymes needed for digestion and assimilation of nutrients. But it takes the expertise of nutrition-oriented chefs to facilitate the reorientation of palates used to pigging out on cooked animal meat to the "living food" nutrition.

Founders Eckard and Perla Rempe have brought international raw food chefs Kristin Surrat and Chad Sarno into the health resort restaurant, the first of its kind in Asia.

Chefs Surrat and Sarno have collaborated to make a dining experience that is unique, pleasurable and satisfying on every level: taste, texture, color and fragrance.

The international master chefs have not only developed a healthy gourmet menu but also alternate to conduct kitchen classes on practical food preparation for optimum wellness in the home.

Raw for health

Suratt, a chef for 17 years, comes from Hawaii, and has been training the 85/15 Gourmet Restaurant kitchen staff since October. She went raw for health. "We are empowered by our food choices," she says.

Suratt started with macrobiotics (no dairy or meat) as a corporate food chef, then became a natural food chef and eventually a raw food chef. It was in 1991 when she came under the aegis of the living food nutrition authority Ann Wigmore at the Hippocrates Health Institute in Puerto Rico.

She takes her work as "inspirational to me to use food to help people feel better."

Introducing raw food into Philippine cuisine does not pose a problem to Suratt. "You don't have to give up anything," she says. "Actually, you can have anything you want!"

At the 85/15 Gourmet Restaurant, she has begun incorporating local ingredients, "especially coconut, which is in great abundance here, and a huge luxury." The *pako* fern she finds "exquisite."

Chef Surrat recently conducted a five-day kitchen seminar on the living food preparation, from "Healthy Breakfast Options" to "Delightful Endings to Beautiful Meals."

Comfort raw food

Chef Sarno, at 26, is one of the master chefs behind the ultra-organic, politically correct Roxanne's in upscale San Francisco area so famous for its haute cuisine that to book a table takes three months.

Sarno comes from an Italian-American family of chefs whose lineage goes back to Sarno, Italy. "I grew up with food all around me all the time." His transformation into raw food began when he gave up dairy at 15 to help stop childhood asthma. Since then Sarno has played around with being vegan (purely plant food) and vegetarian (which include cheese and eggs). He eventually learned how to make his own food.

At 22, already a established raw food chef out of health resorts and culinary institutes, he was asked by Michael and Roxanne Klein to set up a raw food kitchen for the first live-food restaurant to successfully adopt a fine-dining approach in America.

As guest chef touring the East Coast for various restaurants at a time when celebrities like Woody Harrelson, Alicia Silverstone, Demi Moore and the larger culinary world were catching on, he incorporated gourmet raw food into standard menus.

"I create emotionally comforting raw foods for people embarking on a diet change," he says of his work.

The most important thing people should know about the living food diet is, he says, "Raw food shouldn't be painful." He counsels awakened gourmands not to jump into the lifestyle, but choose a transition to a simpler diet.

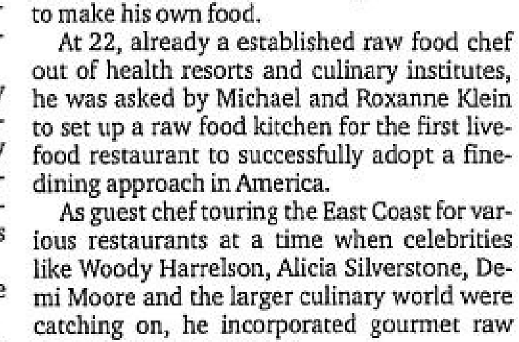
Under Sarno, "Foods can taste as cooked as possible."

On March 13-16, it is his turn to open the restaurant kitchen to show the simply curious, the wellness seeker, or the health investor how.

If you are either one or all of the above, you can drop in for the day and enjoy the kitchen seminar, five-course lunch, 60-minute spa bliss and use of the South Park Pool for P4,000.

For those who want Total Purification, a five-day/four-night inclusive package with personalized medical and spa treatments designed by the medical team comes at P37,500. Before your jaw drops, consider the world-class equivalent of $750 a sensible investment on the search for a correct health fix in these anxious times.

Call The Farm at 822-9056 or (0917) 536-8879.



THAI Manicotti with Ginger Marinara—thinly sliced zucchini as pasta wrap with a blend of ground cashew nuts and *singkamas* that tastes like cheese as filling

CHEFS Chad Sarno and kristin Suratt train the local cooks on healthy gourmet cuisine in a Zen-like kitchen, without flame and searing hot pans.

New restaurant features guest chefs every month

JEAN Henri Lhuillier, Marc Cerqueda, Martin Garcia and Louie Ysmael

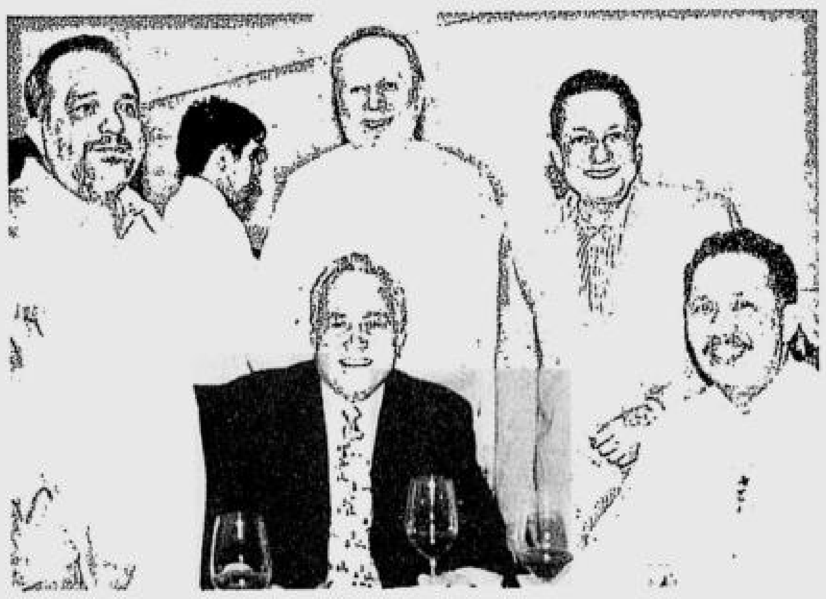
GREENBELT 2 offers another dining alternative with the formal opening of Restaurant 12. One of the companies under the PJ Lhuillier Group of Companies, Restaurant 12 is owned by businessman Jean Henri Lhuillier.

Gracing the launch was Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay, who cut the ceremonial ribbon together with Philippine Ambassador to Italy Philippe Lhuillier and wife Edna, and Jean Henri Lhuillier, PJ Lhuillier Group of Companies executive vice president and general manager.

Also on hand to welcome guests was Restaurant 12 managing director Elbert Cuenca. Friends and business associates of the Lhuillier family were treated to a sampling of Restaurant 12's specialties as prepared by resident chef Noel Silverio.

Restaurant 12 introduces a new concept in dining with guest chefs featured monthly. Sharing their own masterpieces, these guest chefs' creations are meant to complement the restaurant's house menu. This allows Restaurant 12 to offer not only its house specialties but several menus assembled by these guest chefs.

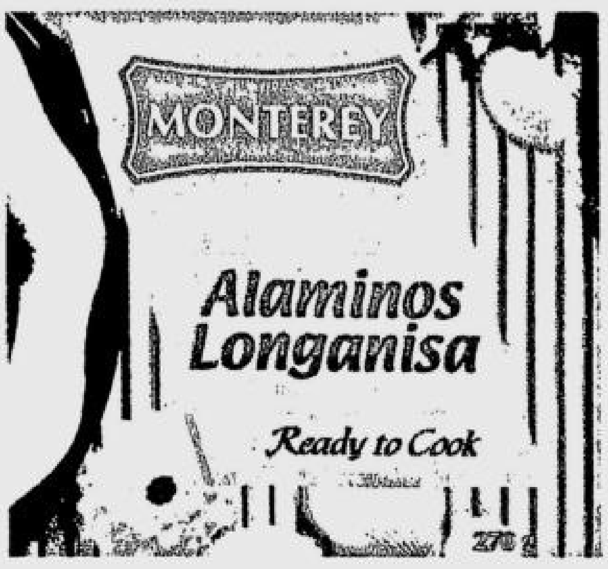
Restaurant 12 is located on the 1/L of Greenbelt 2. Call 757-4568.


AMBASSADOR Philippe Lhuillier (standing, center) with guests (from left): Eddie Gaspar, Pom Raymond, former congressman Mike Romero and Alex Escaño

EDNA Lhuillier, R12 architect Ed Calma and R12 managing director Elbert Cuenca

EXECUTIVE chef Noel Silverio

New in the market: sausage in 15 minutes



MODERN-DAY moms can now serve their family authentic-tasting Alaminos *longanisa* without having to go to Pangasinan. Monterey introduces its new product, Monterey Alaminos Longanisa, native sausage seasoned with indigenous ingredients to give that delicate flavor of garlic and spice. Monterey Alaminos Longanisa is available in all Monterey Neighborhood Meatshops and leading supermarkets. Also available are Monterey Lucban Longanisa, Vigan Longanisa and Longanisa Hamonado.

Italian-American resto keeps its tradition alive in Bicutan

ITALIANNI'S invites diners of all ages to its new branch at SM City Bicutan on Feb. 22.

Jean Paul Manuud, director for operations of Italianni's, says that guests can expect the same excellent menu, generous portions, great service and cozy ambience that its patrons have come to love in the restaurant's other branches at Greenbelt 2, Glorietta 4 and Alabang Town Center.

Italianni's features Spinach and Artichoke Formaggio, Toasted Ravioli, Stuffed Mushrooms, Strawberry Cheesecake, Tartufo, Angel Hair Pomodoro and Shrimp Fra Diablo, Roasted Chicken Italianni's, Grilled Chicken Milanese and Grilled Pork Chop Au Poivre.

New entrées like the Seafood Cioppino, Linguine Con Vongole and Rigatoni Generosa are also must-trys.

In the new SM Bicutan branch, Italianni's will offer affordably priced combination dishes in one plate such as Pizza and Salad, Pasta and Salad, Rice Combo with choice of Pork Chop, Grilled Chicken, Grilled Fish or Roasted Chicken served with grilled vegetables. Available from P190 up, these choices are regularly changed to offer guests a variety of palate-pleasers.

Aside from the food, Italianni's wouldn't be Italianni's without its signature Old-World charm, and the new branch isn't lacking in one. Antique-style mirrors and black and white photographs of early Italian immigrants to the United States occupy the walls to evoke that cozy Italian-American vibe. Chandeliers and wall sconces are also found inside to add to that 1900s-style ambience, complemented by music from Frank Sinatra and other '50s crooners.

Expect the same good service with an efficient and friendly team of managers and servers living up to the Guest Requests Are Never Denied (GRAND) credo of the restaurant.

Italianni's Restaurant in SM Bicutan is located at the 2/L, Bldg. A, SM City Bicutan, Parañaque City.

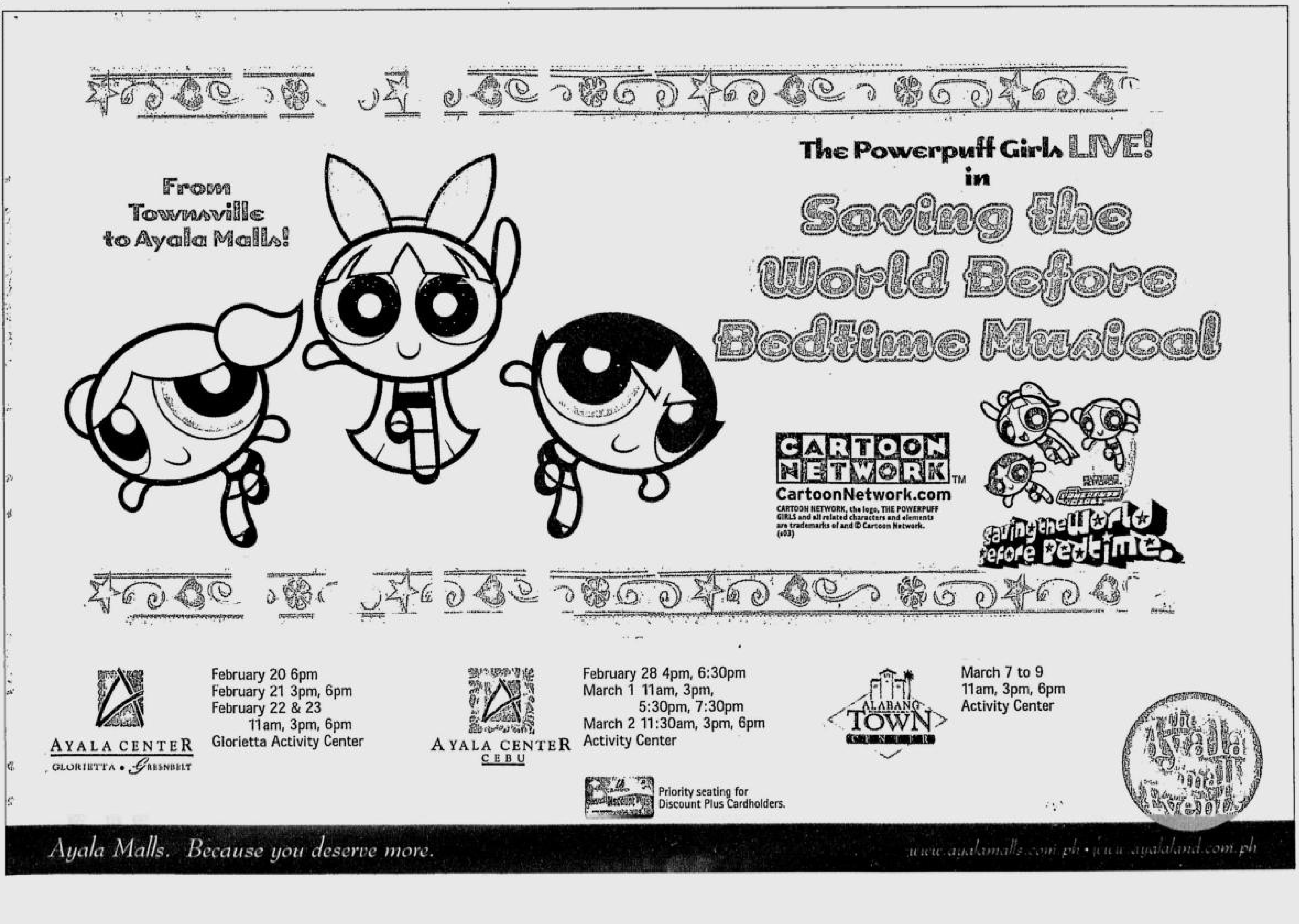
Mall holds fun culinary activities

THE "CULINARY Gold Festival" was recently held at SM Megamall. It was a weekend filled with different home-making activities, from cooking demonstrations to interactive games. Among the participants were Lea & Perrins Worcestershire Sauce, Magnolia Gold and the Center for Culinary Arts. Lea & Perrins Worcestershire Sauce is another quality product of HP Foods Ltd. of the United Kingdom.

The booth of Lea & Perrins Worcestershire Sauce stood out among the rest and was awarded "Best Booth." Lea & Perrins Worcestershire Sauce created a mini "Adobo Kitchen" for the occasion. Apart from the charming décor, it offered samples of chicken and pork adobo spread, to allow mall shoppers to savor the wide array of Lea & Perrins adobo recipes. An information booth answering on-the-spot cooking queries was also featured.

Mall shoppers also had the chance to watch a cooking demo by Chef Jane Paredes with her protégée Patty Ong Loanzon. Paredes showed easy but extraordinary dishes. Among the dishes that she shared with the audience were chicken oriental salad, chunky cream of mushroom soup and leeks, paprika chicken, vegetable curry, and pork liempo adobo.

Paredes advised participants that when preparing meals,they should make it artistic. Avoid being in a bad mood as this will negatively affect your cooking, she said.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Playgrounds may not be safe for children

THE CONSUMER
Marietta Velasco Giron

IT'S high time authorities consider playgrounds as more than just decor in parks or come-ons in business establishments. These are not as safe as we think they are, and kids might get more than just bruises or blisters. For that matter, computer game rooms should be inspected, too. As we have been harping over the years, these game rooms are not only fire hazards. The amount of radiation and toxic emissions generated by computer sets need to be monitored for safety. It is evident that most, if not all, computers in these game rooms are very old units.

A kid who was injured in a restaurant playground should be a warning to everyone. Summer is just around the corner, and kids will be all over playgrounds. The kid's aunt related to us their experience:

M. Allid (mayanallid@hotmail.com) and her family were on their way home when they decided to dine at a restaurant in Tagaytay. The kids had barely warmed up when 8-year-old Bea fell from the monkey bar and hurt her elbow. She had to be brought to a hospital in Manila where an X-ray showed that her right arm was fractured. All the while, she was in shock, screaming because of extreme pain. She had an operation the following morning, and now has to wear a cast for two months. The bill amounted to more than P50,000.

Allid wrote: "Can we hold the management of the restaurant responsible? The incident happened in their playground where the ground was covered with gravel, and there were no warning signs that accidents could happen. How do we go about it?"

We consulted the Bureau of Trade Regulation and Consumer Protection or BTRCP where we got the general impression that local government units should inspect playgrounds in their areas of jurisdiction. Be that as it may, BTRCP information assistant Sheryl Malaluan has promised to assist M. Allid with information on how to file a complaint against the establishment or negotiate on the cost of the child's hospitalization. Call her at 896-5740 or 890-4932.

Code of ethics for pre-need companies

The recent announcement of a code of ethics for pre-need companies was welcome news, especially for legitimate members of the industry. An official of the Philippine Federation of Pre-Need Plan Companies Inc. said that the code will help the pre-need industry "live up to the demands of the social, economic and moral responsibilities to plan holders."

Most plan holders, however, don't know what the code of ethics is all about. Here's a letter from Pacific Plan holder F. G. Custodio (jandy@vasia.com): "Our efforts to get a copy of the code was an exercise in futility. I couldn't even get connected to the Pacific Plan office. Moreover, our sales agent couldn't get a copy much less know about developments in the industry. How can the public be protected from unscrupulous pre-need companies if the code is not available to them? Where can we get a copy of the code?"

Take note that the code of ethics is only an inter-federation incentive and is not sanctioned or honored by pre-need companies that are not affiliated with the federation. Call the federation secretariat at 815-2383.

Don't call the Insurance Commission (IC) for information on pre-need insurance. Until the lawmakers find it fit to hear a long-pending bill on pre-need insurance, the industry is under the jurisdiction of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). The bill proposes that the IC regulate the pre-need industry. We thank IC hearing officer Johnny Mendoza and SEC administrative officer Peter Regulto for the information they shared with us.

Sara Lee praised

Judith Alinsod is one satisfied customer of Sara Lee. She wrote, "I was disappointed that the cups of the bra I bought fell flat after several washing. I decided to call up the telephone number of customer service printed on the product package and complained to the marketing manager, Anna Arcaya, who sent a representative (Millet Impas) to replace the used bra with a new one. She also gave me care tips on how to get the most of these branded brassieres. To Sarah Lee representatives in the country, thanks and praises!

Comments and complaints

From Dr. A. Dizon of acdb85@hotmail.com: "Eight days after I bought a Rolex watch, a part of the crown (trademark) broke. I had it repaired at a watch service center in Alabang Town Center where I was made to pay P7,000. The technician informed me that this kind of repair was not covered by warranty. Nevertheless, he said he would mention it to the proprietor of the shop. For the past three weeks, I had been trying to contact the proprietor, but he was not available."

Elmer P. Lee, revenue officer I-assessment section, is one of the Bureau of Internal Revenue employees who strongly oppose House Bill 5054 and 5465 or the National Internal Revenue Act of 2002 which proposes to abolish the tax collecting agency. He wrote: "Conversion of the BIR into a corporation will not solve corruption, neither will it increase revenue collection. Shortfall in revenue collection is primarily caused by management attitudes because when the employees are restricted in the enforcement of law, tax cheats reign supreme.

"Contrary to allegations of bill proponents, the BIR is not obsolete. Its employees possess the qualifications, competence and expertise required of their job. They have given more than their fair share of love for country and service to the people despite meager salaries and limited resources. They do agree that change is indeed imperative, but it should not be done at their expense. The issues of corruption and lack of qualification must be addressed to the core and within legal bounds."

Check your bill thoroughly and keep tab of what you consume, or you can be charged atrociously for things you didn't order. G. Cus (geraldinn@yahoo) wrote: "We ordered beer and nachos at a bar in Eastwood City. Two hours later, we asked for our bill and couldn't believe we consumed P1,500 worth of beer and a plate of nachos. The total amount was written on a slip of paper, so we asked for a breakdown of items. When the waiter returned, the bill was only a little over P1,400."

Send consumer complaints and comments to giron@mailstation.net

According to the Bureau of Trade and Regulation and Consumer Protection, local government units should inspect playgrounds in their areas of jurisdiction

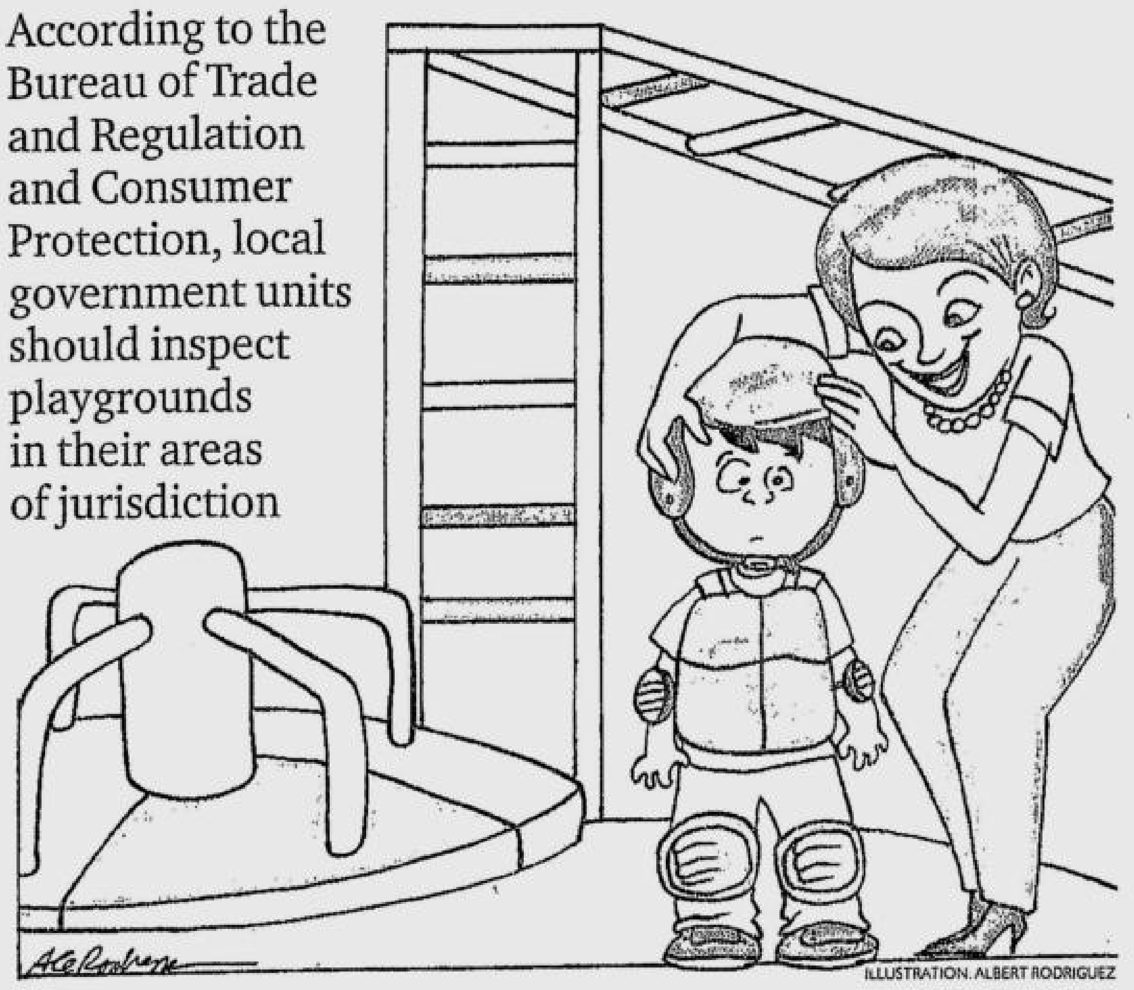

ILLUSTRATION. ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

Greetings

Our warmest greetings to the board of directors, management and staff of STI-Universal Worker, Inc. on your formal launching on the 18th day of February 2003.

It is heartening to note that this newly-formed company seeks to equip Filipino nurses interested in working in the USA (and eventually, in the United Kingdom) with cutting-edge skills through a comprehensive, intensive, highly-individualized and flexible training program geared towards helping them succeed in the competitive overseas job market through review classes in CGFNS, NCLEX, TOEFL, and TSE, as well as an acculturization program to prepare them for their social and professional lives in their country of assignment. Likewise, we commend the company for its initiative of offering 100% scholarship opportunities to deserving candidates, plus visa-processing services and employment assistance through STI's global affiliate—Global Resource for Outsourced Workers, Inc. (GROW)–courtesy of its local and US offices.

Indeed, considering that our health professionals, including nurses, are the country's competitive edge and important contributors to foreign exchange earnings, we are one with STI-Universal Worker, Inc. in its goal of contributing to the enhancement of the skills, competence, professionalism and high standing of the Filipino worker in the international job market. This, in addition to the Filipino already being proficient in English, highly-flexible, and strongly service-oriented, will enhance our image as a competitive workforce that is given due preference over our Asian counterparts.

To STI-Universal Worker, Inc., our sincere congratulations and best wishes for success in your endeavor to generate globally competitive Filipino nurses.

Mabuhay!

Hon. Mar Roxas
Secretary, Dept. of Trade and Industry

It gives me great pleasure to announce and celebrate the birth of a new company with a clear vision – "To be the most sought after and most respected training facility for healthcare and other professional workers."

We are proud to contribute to the goal of "transforming futures" by equipping professionals with skills that will allow them to compete in the global workforce market.

The synergy generated by the partnership between Universal Worker and STI will generate the infrastructure to educate and train healthcare and other professionals by providing access to a greater array of resources, more intensity of instruction and increased personal involvement to achieve each learner's goals.

We pledge to support national development through the continuous and progressive enhancement of professional competencies.

We move forward with confidence as we rely on the combined strengths of Universal Worker and STI to make this meaningful contribution a reality.

Jorge Garcia, M.D.
Chairman of the Board, STI-UWI

Today's occasion marks the culmination of a dream and a vision.

Twenty-three years ago, I left the Philippines for the United States to pursue a deep desire to hone my craft as a nurse. The road was not easy. I had to struggle a few times, learning to quickly deal with unfamiliar equipment, new people, cultural differences, a regional twang that sounded so different, and new work processes.

Along the way, I met several wonderful mentors who served as role models and paved the way for me to reach the professional heights to which I had aspired.

Thus was born a deep desire in me to transfer all the "lessons learned" from my years of experience of working abroad. I want to "give back" to nursing in the Philippines.

Universal Worker was started with another professional nurse, Dr. Heather Kopecky, and a businessman, Al Danto. Our vision was to assist Filipino nurses acquire the necessary skills to become personally and professionally successful as they claim their rightful place in the global workforce. We busied ourselves with developing, improving, and re-designing our education and training techniques and materials to achieve the best possible results.

This partnership with STI comes at just the right time. Together with STI's resources and reach, we hope to enlarge our circle of influence so that more people can benefit from our improved technologies.

We forge together as one, parlaying on each other's strengths, to equip Filipino professionals with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to be globally competent. This we aim to achieve through offering continuing education programs. Global competence will be achieved through extensive preparatory classes for foreign licensure examinations.

The dream is now a reality. Our mission, "to add value to the lives of nurses everywhere," will live on. We are truly grateful for this opportunity to serve.

Annabelle R. Borromeo, RN, PhD
President, STI-UWI

STI-Universal Worker, Inc.:
Synergy for a world-class Filipino professional

Born out of a common mission to carve out a niche for the Filipino professional, two industry leaders in education and professional training have forged a partnership that aims to make the Philippines the preferred source for skilled professionals.

STI Education Services Group (STI ESG), a leading provider of ICT education services, and Universal Worker, Inc., a US-based consulting firm that specializes in training and educating professionals for the global market, have joined forces to form STI-Universal Worker, Inc. (STI-UWI), a company committed to prepare qualified professionals for a successful life and career in countries other than their place of birth.

Quality ICT education backed by a global network

With twenty years of leadership in ICT education, STI continues to empower students with quality learning that is responsive to the needs of the global job market. It pioneered the concept of franchising education, enabling STI to make quality education affordable and available to a larger number of people.

The Academic Development and Program Transfer (ADEPT) system is the vehicle by which STI's academic standards are under its fold. At the core of ADEPT are two guiding principles: maximizing value-added learning and the delivery of good quality, cost-effective and quality education. Key to this is the centralized nature of courseware development and faculty accreditation.

Under the guidance of renowned academic and industry leaders, STI continues to make breakthroughs in developing Filipino talent and providing job opportunities to its graduates through its affiliate company, Global Resource for Outsourced Workers, Inc. (GROW), and now, STI-Universal Worker, Inc.

Global workforce planning

With the birth of STI-UWI, the mold of traditional review modules was broken. Here, trainees undergo comprehensive, intensive, highly individualized and flexible training and review programs, in preparation for the examinations and accreditations required by their specific industries. They are mentored by professionals who have been involved in prestigious board review and public speaking institutions. All are either master or doctorate degree holders and considered experts in their respective fields.

Unique to STI-UWI is the acculturation program designed to prepare candidates for successful social and professional transitions to the country where they will relocate. This value-added consultation is seen as a key factor of STI-UWI trainees having a 98% passing rate in licensure exams in the US. The high passing ratio is also attributed to motivating the trainees to achieve the right mindset to become "world-class professionals."

By acknowledging the good that is in every Filipino, STI and UWI have built a strong foundation in what STI-Universal Worker, Inc. stands for today. And once STI-UWI's reach expands, as it undoubtedly will, Filipinos will gain an even greater edge and come even closer to becoming globally competitive, thanks to the "meeting of minds" of these two great institutions.

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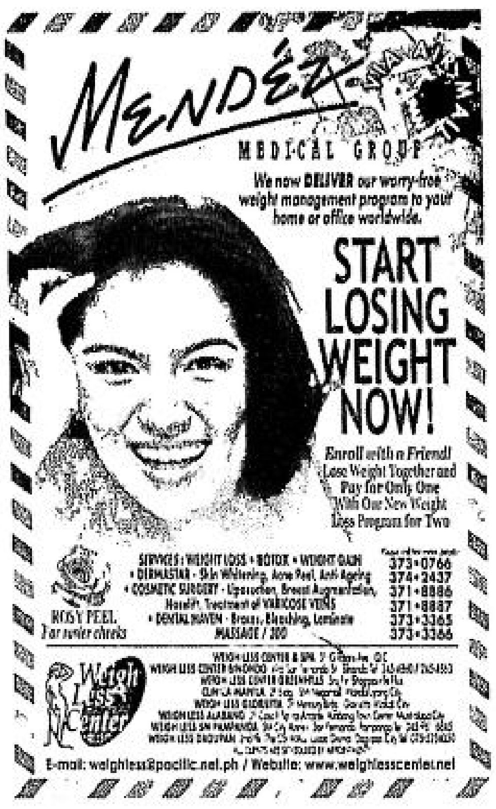

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ASKED AND ANSWERED

Of confusing greens, sticky caramel and troublesome cheesecakes

By Reggie Aspiras

(Editor's note: Lifestyle gets lots of questions relating to food from our readers, whether via e-mail, slow-mail or SMS [texting] either because our readers think we know our way around the kitchen or because they expect we can get help from experts. The latter is truer and easier, so we have asked kitchen goddess Reggie Aspiras to heed our readers' unanswered prayers. Here's a sneak preview of Reggie's culinary SOS column.)

ALL my life, time and again, I've proven the adage that there really is no better way to one's heart than through the stomach. And I would like this to work for the readers, too, by answering all the questions that puzzle them, whether they are first-time cooks or confused aficionados.

For all those who have experimented and failed, there is hope. And for those who have dared and prevailed, there is always something new to learn. All you have to do is ask.

What is the difference between Chinese parsley and cilantro? And what is *kutsay*?

It is amazing that this question seems to be a staple in all cooking classes and demos I've done. Chinese parsley is locally known as *kinchay*, which is commonly used as a savory add-on to Chinese noodles/*pancit*. Its stems and leaves are chopped or pickled whole and sprinkled over the noodles for flavor and as a garnish.

Cilantro, on the other hand, also known as coriander and locally as *wansuy*, is widely used throughout the Asian region and has of late, been a popular addition to continental cuisine, brought about by the melding of culinary cultures. Depending on the type of cuisine, the whole plant is used—seeds, roots, stalks and leaves.

Kutsay is chives, a plant that is related to the onion family and is used to spice up dishes. Chives have a mild onion flavor. They're delicious in many cooked dishes but should be added toward the end of the cooking time to retain their flavor.

Clean break

In making Leche Flan, how do you prevent the caramel sauce from sticking to the bottom of the pan? When I turn my flan on the serving dish, there is a hard piece of caramel at the bottom and it seems like a waste of such good caramel!

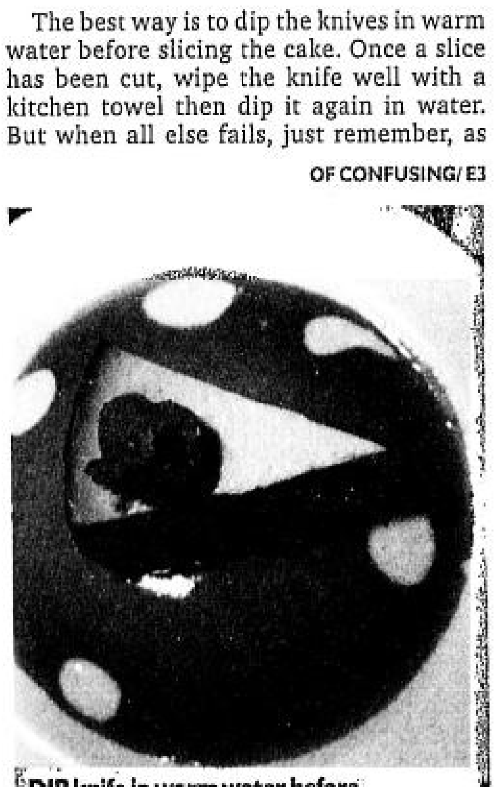
I always add a tablespoon of butter to my caramel when making flan. The addition is done after the syrup has turned golden and all the sugar crystals have dissolved. It helps to brush the pan with a thin coat of butter before pouring the caramel and the custard.

Nice slice

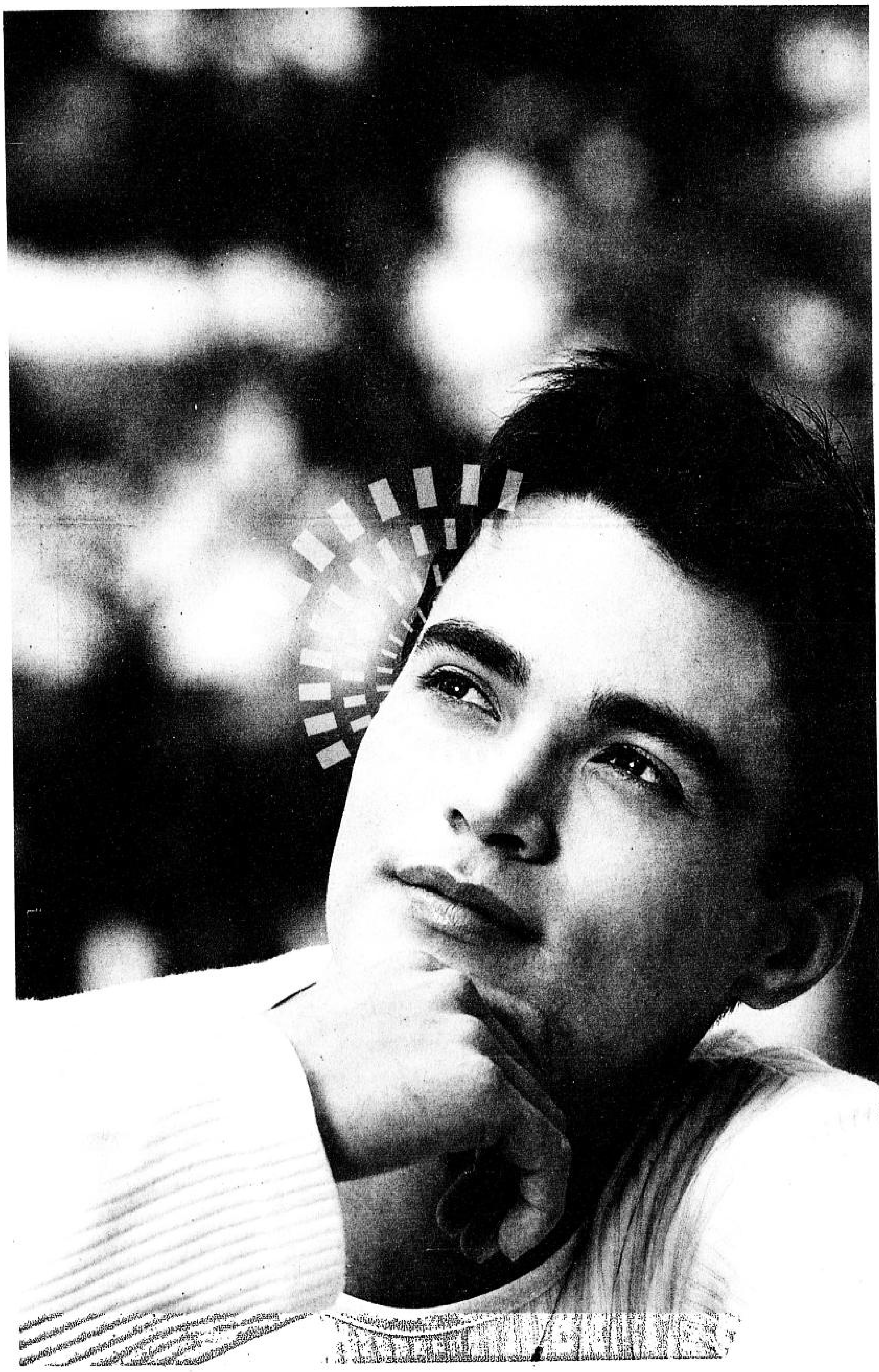
What is the best way to cut cheesecake so the cuts are neat and clean? I have excellent knives that we keep sharpened, and they generally make a mess no matter which knife I try.

The best way is to dip the knives in warm water before slicing the cake. Once a slice has been cut, wipe the knife well with a kitchen towel then dip it again in water. But when all else fails, just remember, as

OF CONFUSING/ E3



DIP knife in warm water before slicing a cheesecake.

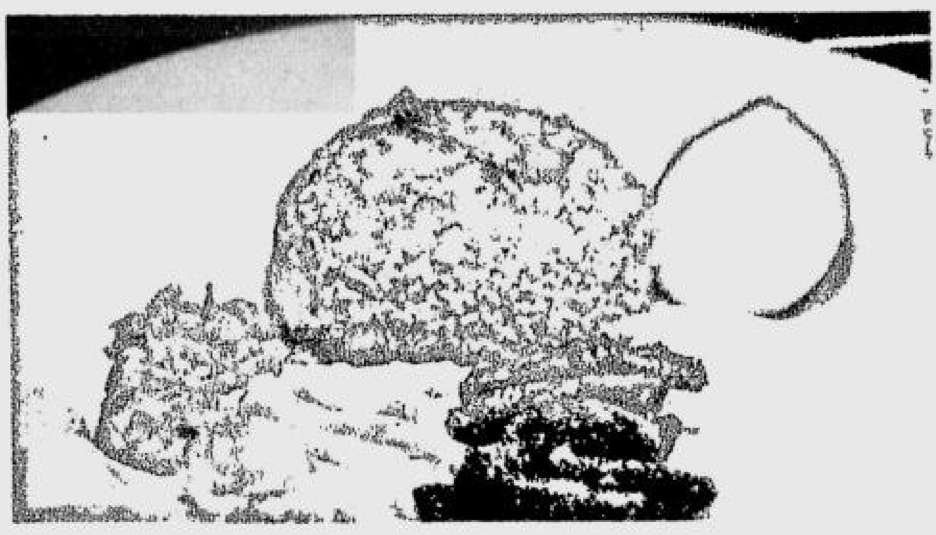


You haven't seen anything yet.

A new day in cellular technology rises soon. Open your eyes to technology that works harder for you, with advanced features that are truly important to you, making life simpler, more interesting and fun.
A new day in cellular rises.

HAINANESE Chicken

BAGOONG Rice



Bells are ringing for new bistro

Chimes has Singaporean-Malaysian specialties on the menu

SPICY Squids

By Vangie Baga-Reyes
Photos by Randy Homillada

A NEW and chic bistro-bar serving Singaporean-Malaysian gourmet specialties has joined the continuously growing list of Metro Manila eating places.

Chimes bistro and bar, operated by the energetic Sheila Romero of the Azzurro chain of restaurants, is at the ground floor of the service apartment-hotel Somerset Millennium on narrow Aguirre Street in Legazpi Village, Makati.

Chimes' quaint yet contemporary look immediately attracts visitors.

Two big metal chimes from Bali, Indonesia, are placed near the entrance to officially welcome guests. Now you know where the name comes from.

Sans the neon signs and colored lights, the entrance is simple and subdued for an Asian restaurant. Only the bistro's menu adorns the glass window.

Inside, is an intimate cluster of wooden tables and well-cushioned seats. The concrete walls, done in solid hues of ochre and interspersed with wood panels, give a rich, vibrant atmosphere to the rather compact space (it can only seat 40 people).

But the place does not have the stifling air of over-modified interiors. The color scheme, complemented by warm ambient lighting, helps to whet the appetite.

The well-designed place provides an intimate place for meetings and small gatherings, while enjoying the various delights of Asian cuisine.

CHICKEN Pandan

Chimes, which also services Somerset's guests, has more than 35 dishes on its menu, all reasonably priced.

The Chimes' menu, specially concocted by Chef Philip Golding, offers a wide variety of popular Singaporean-Malaysian specialties.

For starters, there is Tom Yang Kung, P188, a fish-based soup with prawns, chili, lemon grass and button mushrooms; Sup Taho, P158, a clear chicken broth with snap peas, tofu and black mushrooms; and Asian Spring Rolls, P65, crispy golden vegetable spring rolls with vinegar dip and red curry.

Hot and spicy

For those who like it hot and spicy, crispy Squidlets, P155, fried crispy baby squid with Malay sweet and sour barbecue style sauce, is the best.

For entrees, topping the list of bestsellers are Hainanese Chicken Rice, P185, steamed chicken breast or leg served with Hainanese rice and three sauces including chili and ginger; Chicken Pandan, P120, stir-fried chicken thigh in a sauce of local *pandan* leaves, mixed capsicums, anise and coriander seeds; Satay Goreng, P188, a medley of wok-fried chicken, pork and beef in peanut sauce with mixed capsicums; and Beef Rendang, P285, beef brisket in a sauce of red curry.

OWNER Sheila Romero

If you' re a noodle person, Chimes has Chap Chai, P138, (sauteed chicken, prawns and pork with glass noodles, *bokchoy*, cauliflower and Chinese sausage) for you.

Desserts are not to be missed, especially Ta-Ku, P65, a tapioca topped with coconut cream; and Vanilla Ice Cream with Pisang Goreng, P85, ice cream and fried bananas wrapped in rice paper with syrup and ground nuts.

Romero, with interior designer sister Trisha Bermudez, is now renovating and fixing the 250-square meter space on the second floor directly above Chimes. The place is tentatively called Opia by Azzurro.

"There will be a lounge for music-lovers, cigar room and several private rooms for intimate and exclusive gatherings," Romero said. "Azzurro will handle the kitchen."

Chimes is open 6 a.m. to 11 pm. It serves continental buffet breakfast everyday at P220 per person.

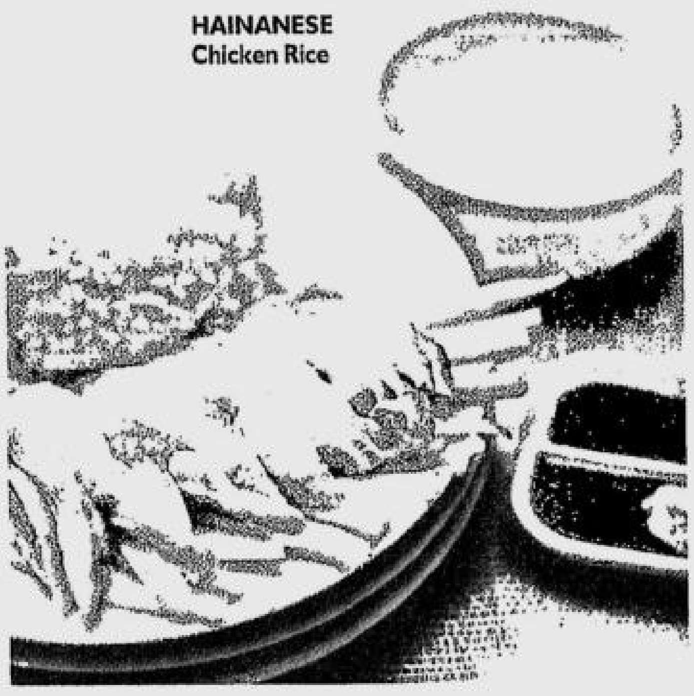
E-mail the author at vbaga@inquirer.com.ph

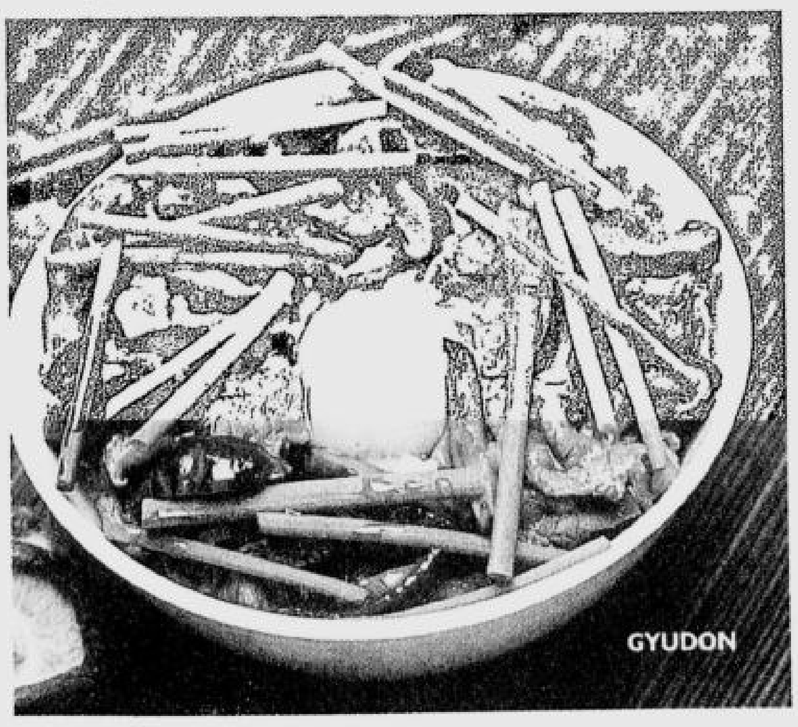
Not just noodles *now*

By Jasmine W. Payo

ALTHOUGH instant noodles have become a meal option for a lot of people, authentic noodle dishes are still healthier and tastier. At Ten Noodles for instance, there's a freshness and a no-MSG guarantee.

HAINANESE Chicken Rice





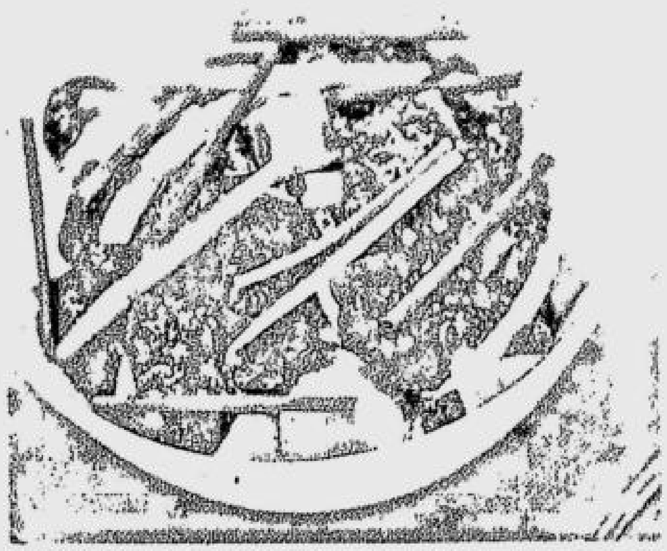
GYUDON

This one-stop Asian noodle shop offers a good variety of traditional noodles from the Philippines, China, Japan, Thailand, Indonesia and Singapore.

"In the past, one had to go to a Filipino restaurant to enjoy Filipino noodles, then to a Thai restaurant for Thai noodles. But with Ten Noodles, we have made it possible for Filipino diners, especially noodle lovers, to experience the flavors of Asia in one convenient place," says Irene Martel Francisco, who opened Ten Noodles three years ago at Harrison Plaza in Manila and branched out soon enough at Level 2 of Glorietta 1, Makati City.

According to Francisco, their Pad Thai (P80), a popular Thai dish of flat noodles with prawns, eggs, chicken, peanuts and beansprouts; and Char Kway Teow (P80), Malaysian noodles with roast pork, Chinese sausage, squid and beansprouts, remain Ten Noodles top-sellers.

To celebrate its third anniversary, Ten Noodles has introduced more Asian dishes on its menu. Aside from its 10 noodle offerings, it now serves Hokkien Mee (P85), a Singaporean dish of *lomi* and *sotanghon* noodles with spinach, prawns and Chinese togue; and Miso Ramen (P85), a Japanese vegetarian soup with white miso.



TAHU Goreng

Rice-based

Rice meals have also debuted on the Ten Noodles food list. "The past years have been good. The restaurant is constantly evolving and we had product tests and experimentation. So now we've added rice dishes and new appetizers. When people came in they sometimes asked 'where's the rice?'" says Francisco.

Affordable at P90-P120, the rice-based additions include Hainanese Chicken Rice, a Singaporean favorite of sliced chicken, cucumber and chili ginger sauce; Cantonese Pork Stir Fry, a dish of pork, mushrooms, broccoli and cabbage with sweet sauce; Gyudon, a Japanese dish of thinly sliced beef and shitake mushroom with raw egg; Squid Curry, spicy squid rings with curry sauce and roasted coconut; and Tahu Goreng, a chilly vegetarian dish of fried tofu with tamarind sauce.

New on the list of appetizers is the Oriental Chicken Salad, a crispy *sotanghon* noodles starter with chicken strips, carrots and turnips mixed in sauce; while the Fried Banana with Mantecado Ice Cream is the new dessert.

Value treats

Ten Noodles has also introduced the Ten+ Value Treats. A free Iced Tea or Buco Pandan Loco dessert and other special treats await diners for every P110 food purchase.

"This is our way of saying thanks to our customers," says Francisco.

But aside from the new food features, other business-related developments are underway. Noting that Ten Noodles is an original restaurant concept, Francisco discloses she plans to go into franchising.

"Right now, we're looking into franchising in the Ortigas area. People think Ten Noodles is a franchise but it is actually homegrown," she says.

Hopefully, it's a move that will bring Ten Noodles long life indeed.

Of confusing greens, sticky caramel and troublesome cheesecakes

From page E1

long as the cheesecake is good, everyone seems to forgive the bad cut!

Rhum cake recipe

Do you have an easy recipe for rhum cake? I bake and I've been dying to try to make a perfect rhum cake.

This is one of my favorite rhum cake recipes. I've grown tired of the plain ones so I've added orange and citrus peel to the recipe. If you like to stick to tradition, just omit the orange zest and follow the recipe. By the way, this is really easy!

Rhum cake with mixed citrus peel

1 c butter
2 ½ c all-purpose flour, sifted
1 c sugar
2 tsp baking powder
zest of 2 oranges and 1 lemon
1 tsp baking soda
½ tsp salt
4 eggs, separated
1 c walnuts, finely chopped
1 c sour cream

Rhum Sauce/Glaze:
¾ c sugar
½ c rhum
½ c butter

Cream butter; gradually add ¾ c sugar and beat until lemon yellow in color, for about 10 minutes.

Add the zests and the egg yolks one at a time, beating thoroughly after each addition.

Add sifted dry ingredients alternately with sour cream, beat until smooth. Fold in nuts.

In a separate bowl, beat egg whites with the remaining ¼ c of sugar until stiff peaks.

Fold the egg whites gently into the butter mixture.

Pour into greased 9 or 10-inch 2-quart tube pan.

Bake at 350° for 45 minutes to 1 hour.

Do not un-mold; using a cake tester or a skewer, poke holes onto the cake and pour hot rhum sauce. Wait for the sauce to settle or for the cake to absorb it.

The cake is best glazed while warm.

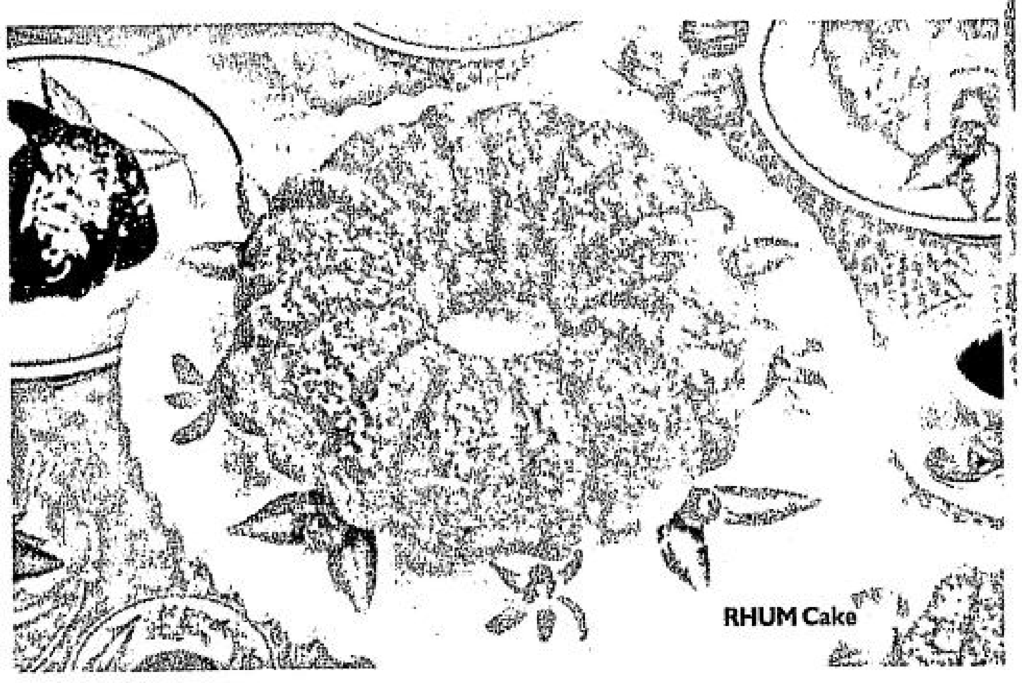
Age for at least a day, as all liquor cakes are best served aged.

To make the rhum sauce:

In a saucepan, combine sugar, butter and rhum, bring to boil.

Bon appetit!

E-mail questions to reggie1@skyinet.net



RHUM Cake

Cooking demo series begins this month

MAKATI Shangri-La's cooking demonstration series at Cheval Blanc begins this month.

Executive chef Christopher Romine, executive sous chef Thomas Figovc and executive pastry chef Xavier Castello will demonstrate nouvelle cuisine dishes for aspiring chefs and homemakers, like Pan-Fried Foie Gras with Caramelized Mango for appetizers, Asian Barbecue Rack of Lamb with Crushed Sweet Potato, Baby Bok Choy with Chinese Black Bean Jus for entree and Chilled Papaya Soup with Passion Fruit Sorbet for dessert. At the end of the session, participants will get to eat for lunch the demo dishes.

Classes will be held Feb. 22, March 22, April 26 and May 24.

Fee for the entire course is P5,000 net and P1,100 for individual classes. Price is inclusive of lunch at Cheval Blanc.

Call 840-0884 or 813-8888 local 7588/7599.

10-minute recipe for busy homemakers

TUNE into back-to-basics food such as classic steak dinner with grilled vegetables. If you don't have a charbroil grill, you can still enjoy all the hearty smoked flavors of an outdoor barbecue.

Created by Chef Reggie Aspiras, this 10-minute recipe is designed for busy homemakers.

HP Barbecue Sauce, whose full-bodied goodness has all the flavors of wood and man-sized spices, is another quality product of HP Foods of the United Kingdom, makers of Lea & Perrins Worcestershire Sauce.

Classic Steak Dinner

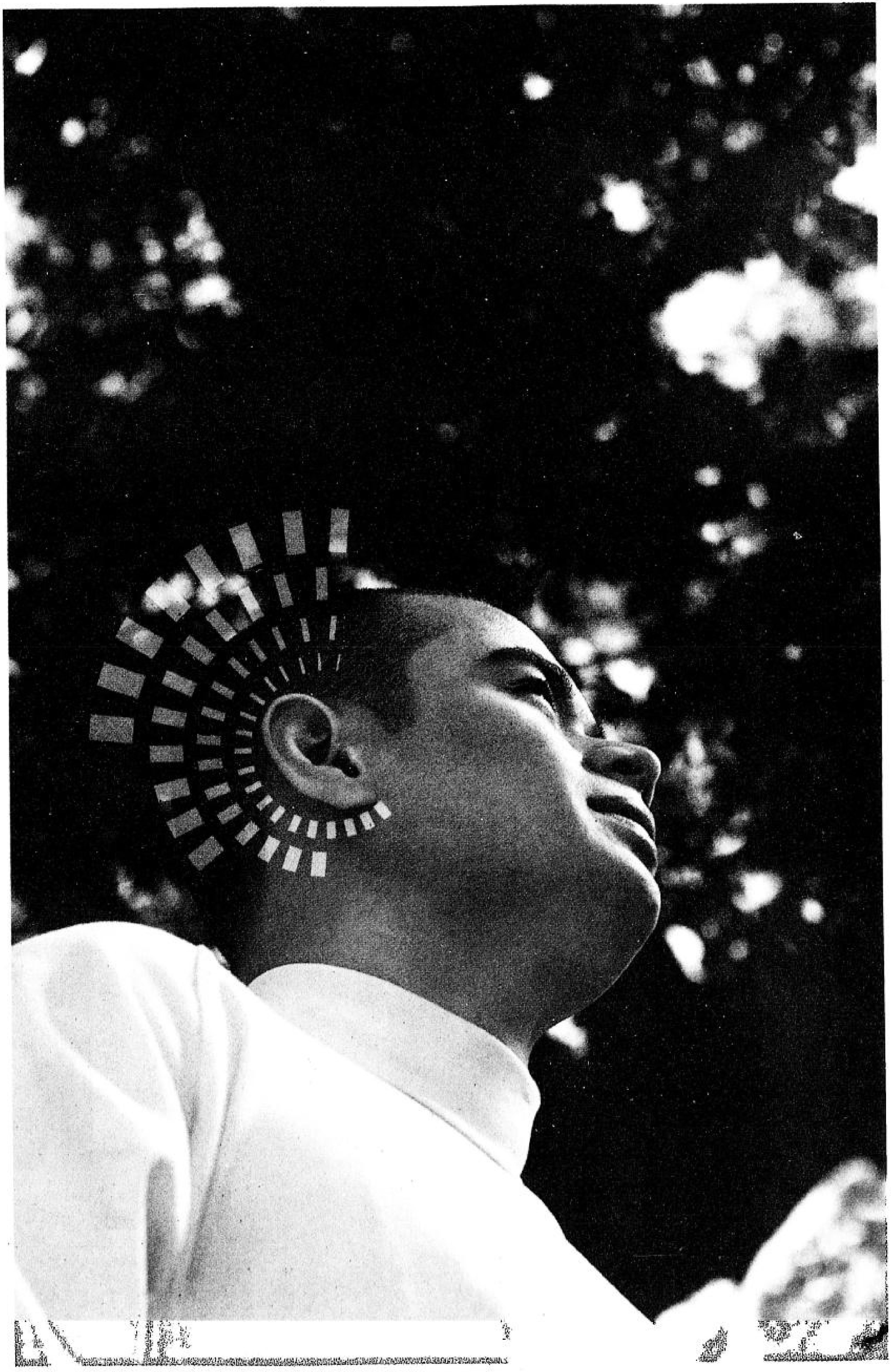
1 rib-eye steak
salt
pepper
vegetable oil
1 zucchini, medium
1 potato large
1 onion large
broccoli flowers
1 tbsp HP original sauce
1 tbsp HP Barbecue Sauce

Season steak with salt and pepper on each side. Heat up griller with 1 tbsp vegetable oil. Grill the steak.

In a bowl, put in 1 tbsp of HP Sauce (original), 1 tbsp HP Barbecue Sauce. Mix well. Baste the steak with this mixture on each side.

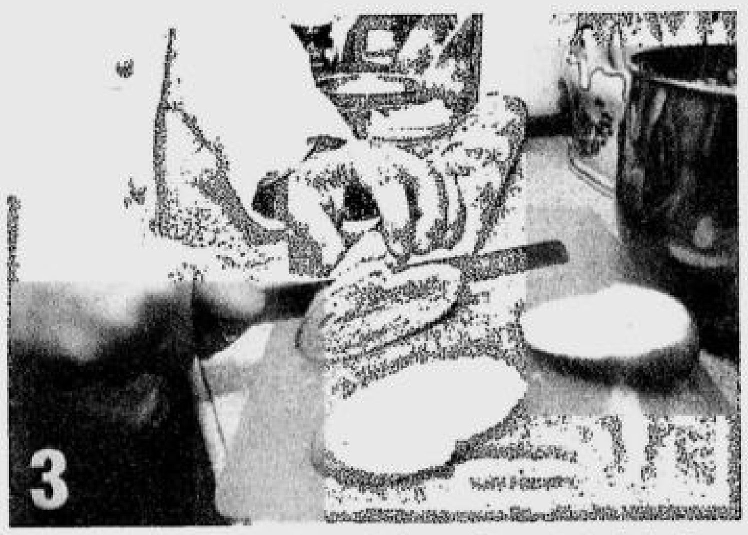
For the vegetables: Quarter 1 large zucchini, 1 large potato, 1 large carrot and broccoli flowers. Season vegetables with salt and pepper. Add fresh rosemary leaves. In a saucepan, heat up 1 tablespoon of olive oil and caramelize 2 medium-sized onions. Cut onions into big rings. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Arrange caramelized onions on the center of a platter. Put the grilled steak on top of the onions. Arrange the grilled vegetables around the steak.

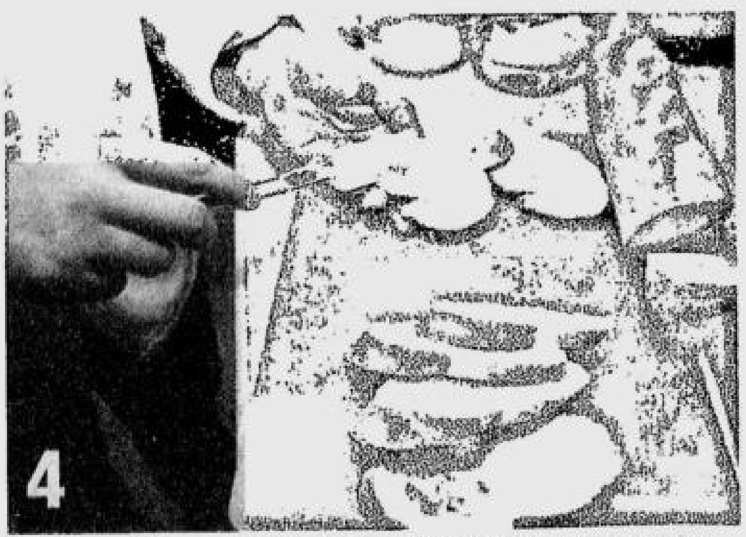


Have you heard?

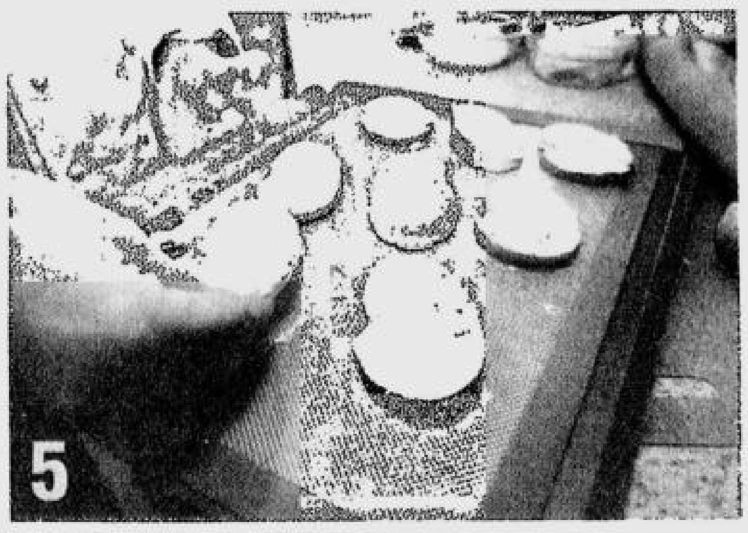
A new day in cellular technology rises soon. Enjoy clearer conversations and strong signals nationwide. Discover new ways to communicate, new ways to get the message across with the latest in GSM technology.
A new day in cellular rises.



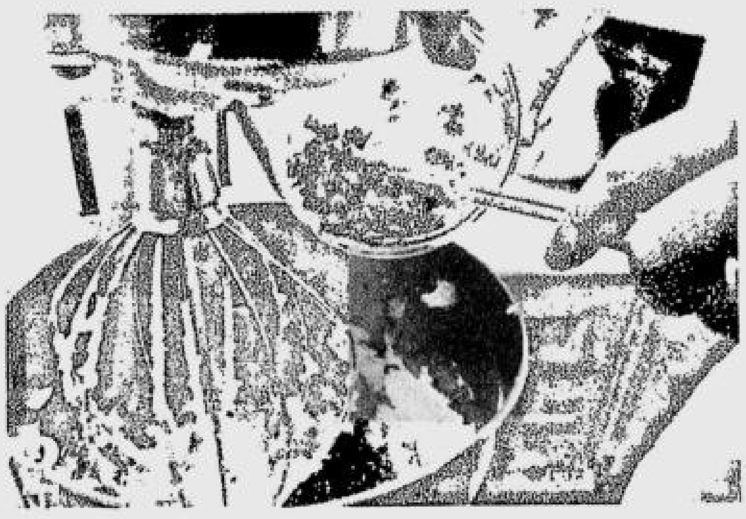
FOR the garlic toasts, slice diagonal pieces of baguette to desired thickness.



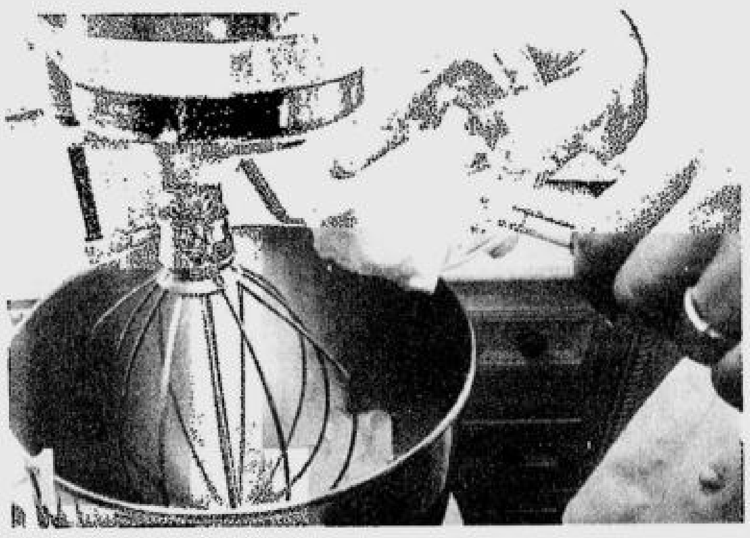
WITH a spatula, generously spread butter mix on both sides of the bread.



TOAST in warm oven toaster for three minutes or until sides start to brown.



ADD garlic, parsley, spring onions, salt and continue to mix thoroughly. Set aside.



SOFTEN butter by letting it sit in room temperature for one hour. Then cream butter using an electric hand mixer until butter is light, creamy and a bit airy.

Why buy when you can make French garlic toasts and croutons at home in a few easy steps?

Recycle bread into croutons

By Vangie Baga-Reyes
Photos By Johnny Villena

STEP BY STEP

BREAD is a convenient food, and versatile in so many ways. Even old or stale bread can be reincarnated as croutons. Croutons are ideally used to garnish soups, salads and other dishes.

Homemade croutons taste so much better than those bought in supermarkets or restaurants. And, they only take a short time to make.

Cut up bread in squares the size of the croutons you like, toss with just enough olive oil or butter to coat very lightly. Put in a single layer on cookie sheet and bake until lightly brown and crispy dry. Stir croutons occasionally so that all sides are browned.

If you like your croutons seasoned, Johnlu Koa of The French Baker says you can mix the butter with garlic, parsley, oregano, spring onions "or whatever combination of spices you like."

After baking, allow croutons to cool and place them in jars. Cover tightly and store in a cool dry place. You can also store them in zip lock bags for a week. You may also freeze croutons to prolong shelf life up to six months.

Koa says homemade croutons can also be ground up and used as breadcrumbs.

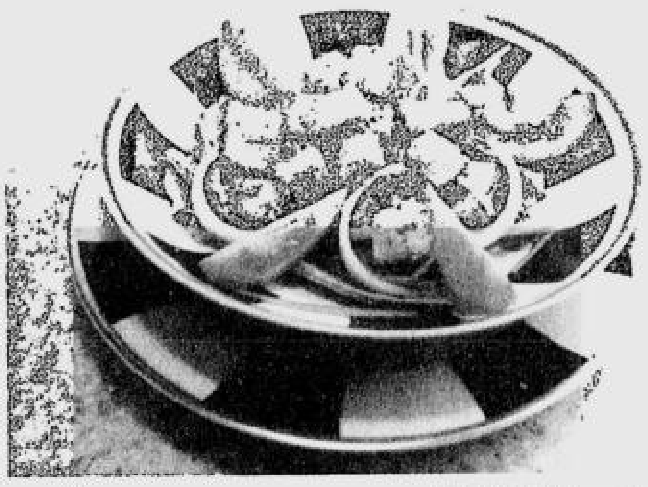
If you have enough garlic-butter mixture, you can also make French garlic toasts.

Slice diagonal pieces of baguettes, spread butter mix on both sides of the bread and toast in warm oven toaster until sides start to brown. Serve immediately.

Ingredients

1 loaf French Baker baguette
1 bar Magnolia Gold Butter
2 heads chopped fresh garlic
¼ c chopped fresh parsley
¼ c chopped fresh spring onions
1 tsp iodized salt

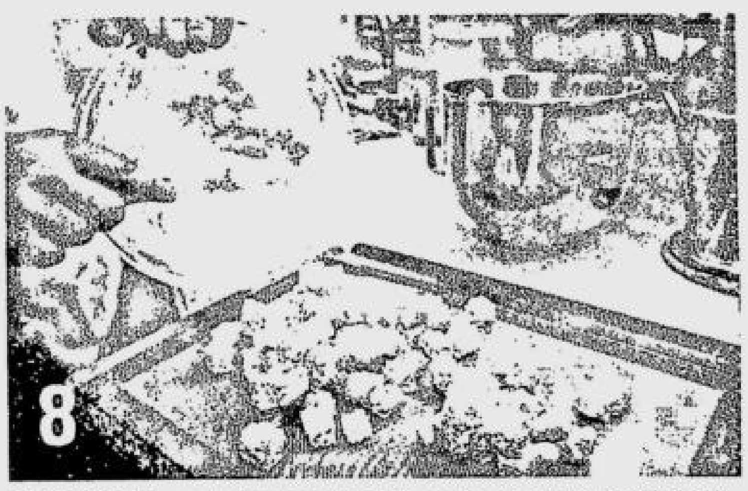
For suggestions, e-mail vbaga@inquirer.com.ph



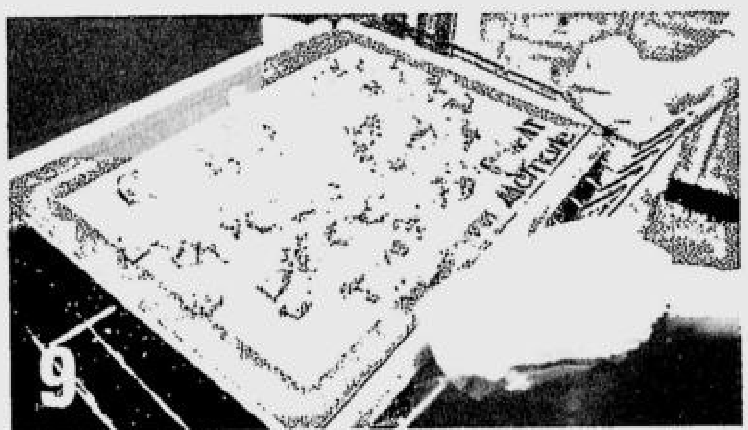
HOMEMADE croutons for Caesar's Salad or any tossed green salad.

FOR the garlic croutons, cut old bread from baguette or any white or wheat loaf bread into ¾ inch cubes and set aside. Generously brush the sides of a bowl with the garlic-butter mixture.

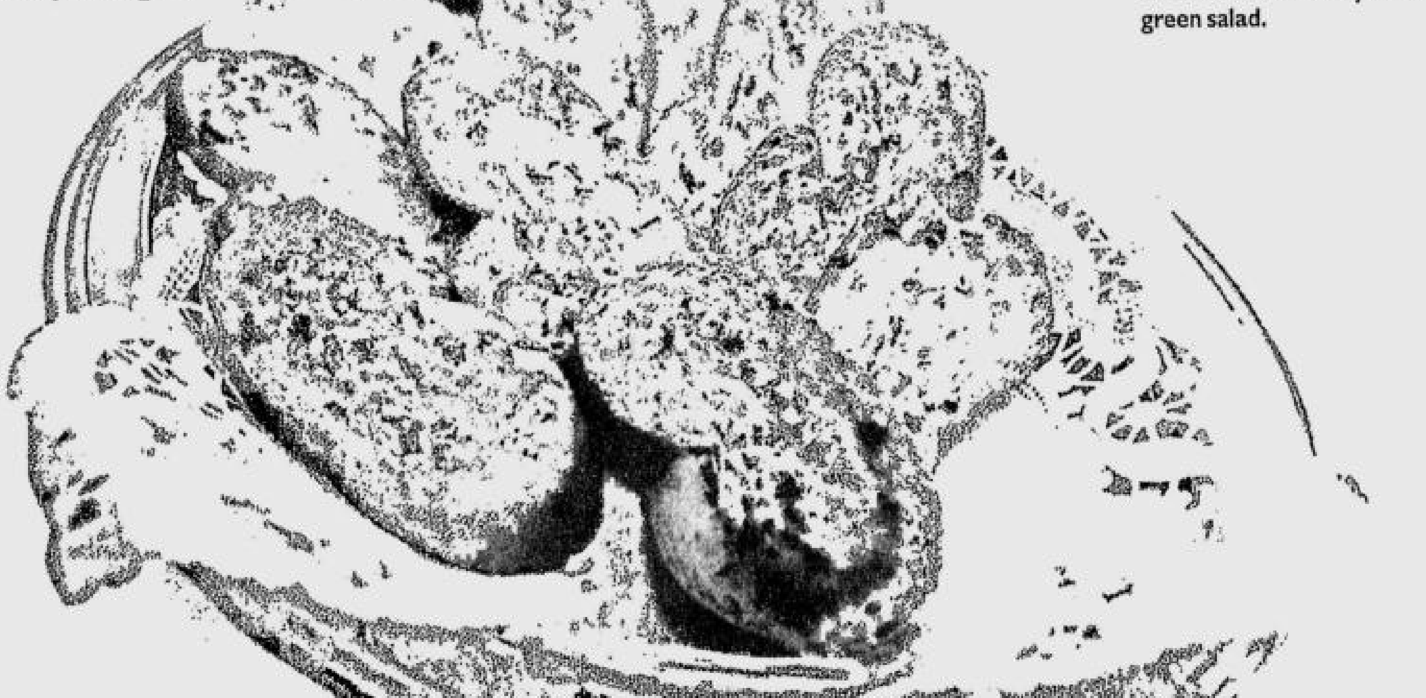
TOSS in the cubed bread pieces until uniformly coated. Add more garlic-butter spread if needed.



TRANSFER the coated bread cube pieces on a sheet pan and bake in a preheated oven at 100°C for one hour or until croutons become crisp and crunchy.



AFTER cooling, transfer the croutons to a sealed container and set aside for use as a fresh salad topping.



FRENCH Garlic Toasts

Welcoming the Year of the Goat

SUPER Bowl Of China and Big Buddha Restaurant recently treated guests to a lion dance performance in celebration of the Chinese New Year.

Super Bowl of China and Big Buddha are two of the leading Chinese casual dining restaurants in the metro today, serving guests who are looking for value-for-money selections. They have over 100 choices on their menu that include a variety of dimsums, fried rice and toppings, congees, roasts, main dishes and desserts served in generous portions at pocket-friendly prices.

Super Bowl branches are at Jupiter St., BelAir, Makati City; the Megastrip, SM Megamall; and Glorietta 4 (ground level, beside Rustan's Essences).

Big Buddha Restaurant is located at the 2nd Level of Greenbelt 3, Makati City.

Grand party marks food and fun republic's launch

TASTE Buds, the newly opened restaurant row on the second level of the Pedro Gil Wing of Robinsons Place Manila, recently held its well-attended grand launch. Dubbed as "The Food and Fun Republic," it is the only dining place with nine full-service food and beverage outlets.

A brainchild of Robinsons Land Corp. (RLC), one of the country's leading mall developers, Taste Buds has a unique dining format that incorporates variety in food offerings and a cozy ambience in one accessible venue. Moreover, Taste Buds gives the same pleasure that one can get from dining al fresco due to its compact and unique layout, but at the same time enjoy the security, comfort and convenience that a mall can bring.

Nearly a thousand guests attended the party and were welcomed by RLC officials led by James L. Go, chair and CEO; Frederick D. Go, EVP; Minda V. Carpio, VP for lease; and Tommy L. O, VP for complex administration.

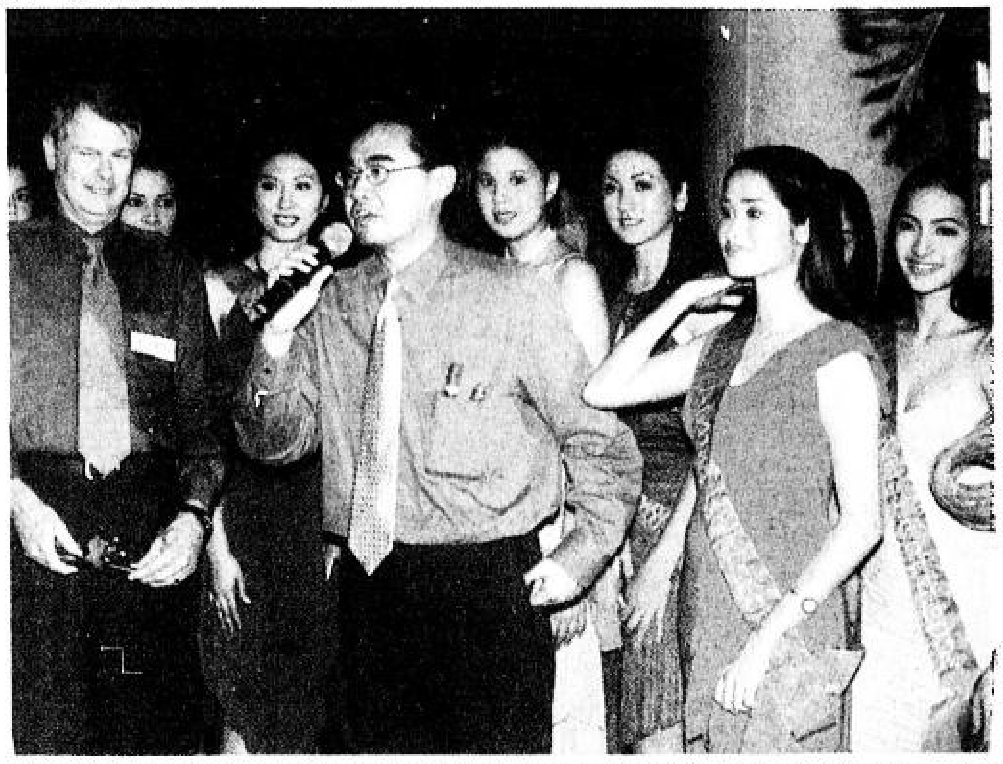
Also present were the owners of the nine food establishments: the Tanalgo siblings, JM, Rose and Bing of Bacolod Chicken Inasal; Jimmy James and Irene Juan of Sushi-Ya; Sugarhouse's Marcelo and Alice de Guzman; Michael and Nameeta Dargani and Archie Rodriguez of Tequila Joe's; Eric and Marirose Rabat of Dencio's; Tang City's William and Amy Guido; Pinoydon partners Martin Litton, Deane Montoya and Alain Panlilio; the Benitez clan of Mario's Kitchen, and Coffee Partners Inc.'s Robert Boxwell Jr. for San Francisco Coffee.

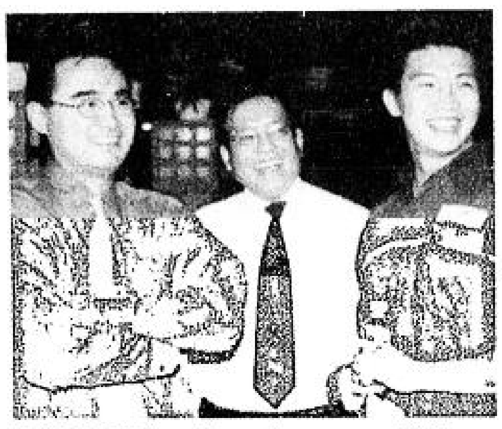
DJ Crystal of Magic 89.9 hosted the festivities, which included a live performance by a musical quartet. The formal opening rites started with the ceremonial ribbon-cutting by RLC EVP Frederick D. Go, who was assisted by Big R Supercenter general manager Ron Menhennet, and the 12 Miss Robinsons finalists: Aysha Villaroman, Nikki Meneses, Joana Rumohr, Maribeth Quiacosan, Sheena Flores, Angel Montilla, Ma-Rose Oabel, Jeramie Alagon, Blenda Ariola, Kara Aguas, Diane Espedido and Nica Messer.

Guests were treated to specialty dishes, drinks and desserts. The Miss Robinsons finalists took time out to go around the Taste Buds area, sample the food and talk to owners to find out what each restaurant had to offer.

Also seen enjoying the party were basketball player Vince Hizon, Shaan Bermudez, columnist Johnny Litton and Bess Lim and Eunice Acejo of Manila Galleria Suites.

ROSE Tanalgo of Bacolod Chicken Inasal, TV/events host Shaan Bermudez, PBA heartthrob Vince Hizon and Bess Lim of Manila Galleria Suites

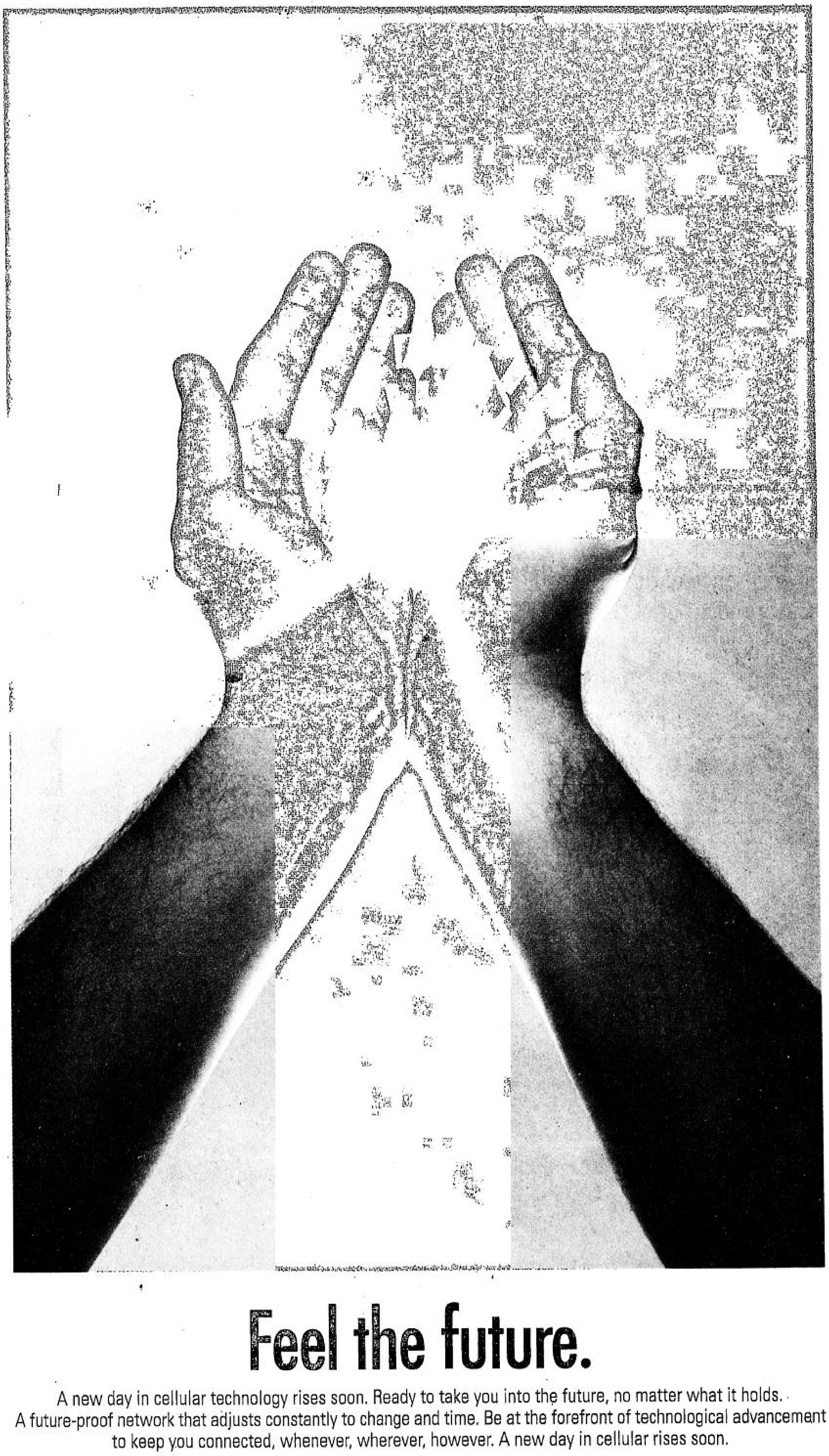

RLC EVP Frederick Go and Big R Supercenter general manager Ron Menhennet with the Miss Robinsons bevy of beauties


LAUGHING heartily at the party are RLC EVP Frederick Go, RLC High Rise Buildings Division GM Danny Ignacio and Louie Kaw of Amico Steel.

MISS Robinsons finalist Jeramie Alagon (right) pose with Pinoydon partners Deane Montoya and Martin Litton.

MISS Robinsons finalist Diane Espedido and Pinoydon partner Alain Panlilio

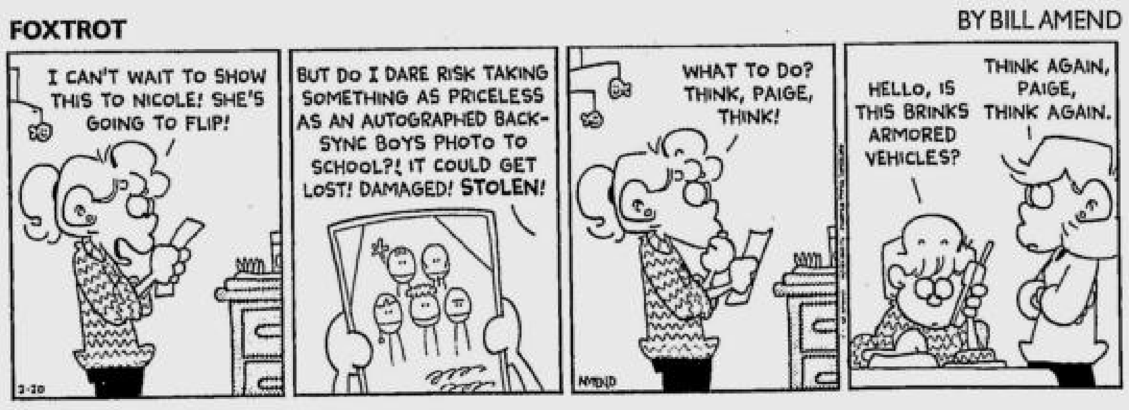
MAVIS Manotoc-Fuentebella (right) and a colleague from Kawayan Cove enjoy the resort-like ambience of Dencio's.


Feel the future.

A new day in cellular technology rises soon. Ready to take you into the future, no matter what it holds.
A future-proof network that adjusts constantly to change and time. Be at the forefront of technological advancement to keep you connected, whenever, wherever, however. A new day in cellular rises soon.

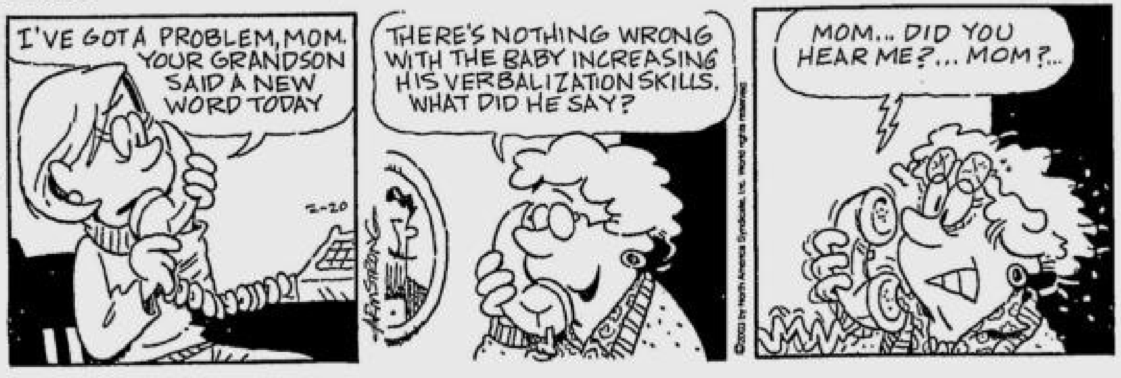
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


I CAN'T WAIT TO SHOW THIS TO NICOLE! SHE'S GOING TO FLIP!
BUT DO I DARE RISK TAKING SOMETHING AS PRICELESS AS AN AUTOGRAPHED BACK-SYNC BOYS PHOTO TO SCHOOL?! IT COULD GET LOST! DAMAGED! STOLEN!
WHAT TO DO? THINK, PAIGE, THINK!
HELLO, IS THIS BRINKS ARMORED VEHICLES?
THINK AGAIN, PAIGE, THINK AGAIN.
2-20
AMEND

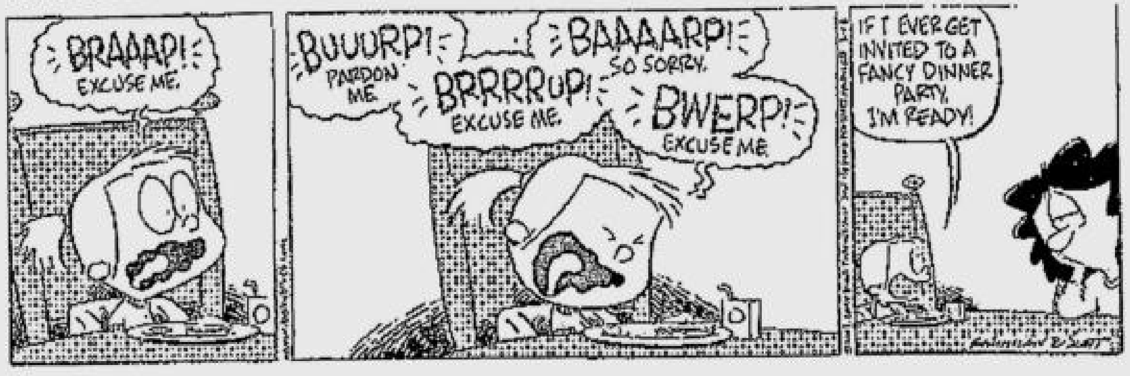
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


I'VE GOT A PROBLEM, MOM. YOUR GRANDSON SAID A NEW WORD TODAY
THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH THE BABY INCREASING HIS VERBALIZATION SKILLS. WHAT DID HE SAY?
MOM... DID YOU HEAR ME?... MOM?...
2-20
ARMSTRONG

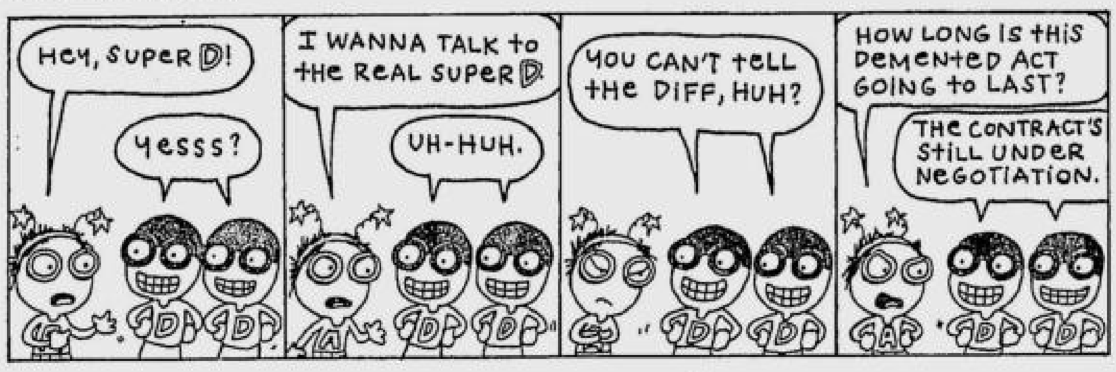
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


BRAAAP! EXCUSE ME.
BUUURP! PARDON ME.
BAAAARP! SO SORRY.
BRRRRUP! EXCUSE ME.
BWERP! EXCUSE ME.
IF I EVER GET INVITED TO A FANCY DINNER PARTY, I'M READY!
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


HEY, SUPER D!
YESSS?
I WANNA TALK TO THE REAL SUPER D.
UH-HUH.
YOU CAN'T TELL THE DIFF, HUH?
HOW LONG IS THIS DEMENTED ACT GOING TO LAST?
THE CONTRACT'S STILL UNDER NEGOTIATION.

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You are self-aware and emotionally deep. The word superficial is not even in your vocabulary. You're frank, and this honesty gives you a self-deprecating humor. You display remarkable insight into the emotions and motivations of others. People often turn to you for advice. The year ahead is one of fresh beginnings and surprising turns.

Birthdate of: Erma Bombeck, columnist/writer; Tyne Daly, actress; Alan Rickman, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Delays with respect to travel now come to an end. Many things in your life go forward with much more ease from today onward.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Everything with respect to earning money now gets a green light. If you are looking for a job or making improvements to where you currently work, things will get much better!

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): For months now, you've dealt with old business with a partner or close friend. Starting today, you can make more headway in a progressive, positive manner.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Delays that affected your job are finally a thing of the past. Expect to accomplish much more and to enjoy your job more as well.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): It's been difficult satisfying friends and members of groups who want your time. Now the conflict that prevented you from being as social as you would like is over.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Delays from senior management made progress in your job difficult recently. Now your role is clearly defined. Finally, you have a much better idea of where you are going.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): It's been a struggle trying to make headway in areas connected with publishing, travel and higher education for some time.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Financial support from others is finally forthcoming. You knew this would happen; however, red tape and delays frustrated your progress. Expect a miracle.

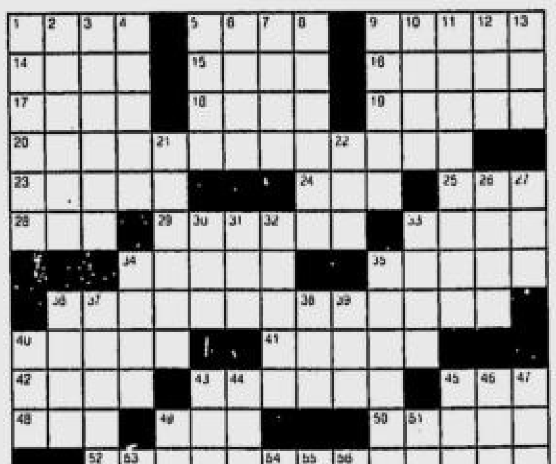
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Challenges with friends and close partners have frustrated you for some time now. Finally, you feel free of these delays and annoyances.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Old business has haunted you for too long now. Starting today, you can start a fresh, clean slate at work. Things will be much easier in the future.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Everything having to do with show business, the entertainment scene, the arts and professional sports improves hugely in your life now.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): It's been hard to make headway at home and in domestic matters recently. However, now you have a better idea of what you want to achieve.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Diane C. Baldwin
Columbia, MD
2/19/03

ACROSS
1 Professional charges
5 Milne's Winnie, e.g.
9 Gazed amorously
14 1996 Tony winner
15 Arm bone
16 Debonair
17 La Scala highlight
18 Gosh darn!
19 Shakespearean forest
20 Affable fellow
23 Barkin or Burstyn
24 Sailor's assent
25 Two pool lengths
28 Woad or anil
29 Tallow taper
33 Water conduit
34 Montague son
35 Hearth implement
36 Prissy one
40 Flick
41 Flavor
42 Adam's offspring
43 Manufactured home
45 Chew the fat
48 Knight's title
49 Afternoon affair
50 Country on the Adriatic
52 Play-by-the-rules chap
57 Au revoir!
59 Skyrocket
60 Turkish potentate
61 Nods off
62 Enthralled with
63 All, formerly
64 Perfume allure
65 ___ I say more?
66 Hardy heroine

DOWN
1 Set up for a fall
2 In a spooky manner
3 Isolate
4 Governor's domain
5 Jefferson's vice president
6 Dash
7 Debate side
8 Scalawag
9 Missouri tributary
10 Spiritual guide
11 Feminine
12 Celebration night
13 Hibernation spot
21 Create a cryptogram
22 Needle feature
26 Tarzan's friends
27 For each
30 Singer Grant
31 Butterfly snare
32 Look for water
33 "__ Richard's Almanac"
34 Churn up
35 Irrational fear
36 Asian desert
37 Large
38 Big galoot
39 Healthful getaway
40 Pas' mates
43 Shooter missile
44 Dried fruit
45 Soothe a sore throat
46 Island greetings
47 Country lanes
49 Have faith in
51 Leaflet
53 Adolescent
54 Up in smoke
55 Destructive emotion
56 Walked heavily
57 Junk mail, mostly
58 Sleepy's pal

Wednesday's puzzle solved

A	M	A	S	S	■	S	E	G	O	■	G	E	N	E
C	A	B	A	L	■	A	V	I	D	■	I	D	O	L
M	U	L	H	O	L	L	A	N	D	D	R	I	V	E
E	D	E	L	W	E	I	S	S	■	I	D	T	A	G
■	■	■	■	■	A	V	I	■	K	E	L	S	E	Y
W	A	B	A	S	H	A	V	E	N	U	E	■	■	■
A	D	O	R	E	■	■	E	L	I	■	■	M	O	B
N	E	S	T	E	G	G	■	S	T	E	P	O	N	E
E	N	S	■	■	U	A	W	■	■	S	A	U	C	E
■	■	■	H	E	S	T	E	R	S	T	R	E	E	T
B	A	S	A	L	T	■	D	E	E	■	■	■	■	■
A	M	E	N	S	■	A	L	F	A	R	O	M	E	O
S	U	N	S	E	T	B	O	U	L	E	V	A	R	D
E	S	S	O	■	A	B	C	S	■	P	A	U	L	O
D	E	E	M	■	T	Y	K	E	■	S	L	I	E	R

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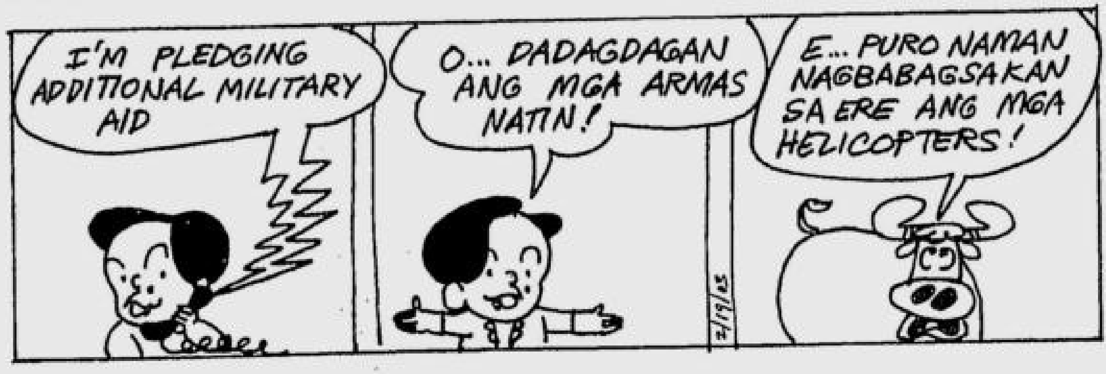
2/21/03

S	C	A	R	■	P	L	E	A	S	■	E	Z	R	A
N	O	U	N	■	E	A	R	T	H	■	R	U	I	N
A	N	N	A	B	E	L	L	E	E	■	M	I	N	T
F	A	T	■	I	R	A	E	■	B	R	I	D	G	E
U	N	S	C	R	E	W	■	M	A	I	N	E	■	■
■	■	■	A	D	D	■	C	O	N	C	E	R	T	O
B	A	S	I	S	■	C	A	R	G	O	■	Z	O	O
A	R	A	N	■	G	O	W	N	S	■	G	E	T	Z
R	E	N	■	D	I	V	E	S	■	G	E	E	S	E
B	A	D	G	E	R	E	D	■	O	Y	E	■	■	■
■	■	R	E	L	A	Y	■	S	O	P	R	A	N	O
S	H	A	R	I	F	■	A	L	L	S	■	P	O	D
C	O	D	A	■	F	A	M	I	L	Y	T	R	E	E
U	S	E	R	■	E	R	I	C	A	■	A	I	N	T
D	E	E	D	■	S	E	D	E	R	■	O	L	D	S

This is the correct answer to Tuesday's puzzle. Our apologies to our loyal crossword puzzle followers.

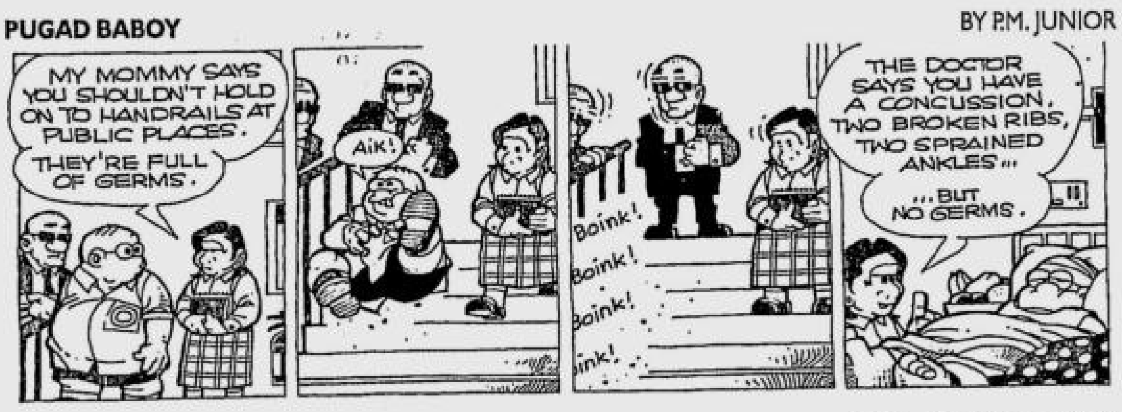
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


I'M PLEDGING ADDITIONAL MILITARY AID
O... DADAGDAGAN ANG MGA ARMAS NATIN!
E... PURO NAMAN NAGBABAGSAKAN SA ERE ANG MGA HELICOPTERS!
2/19/03

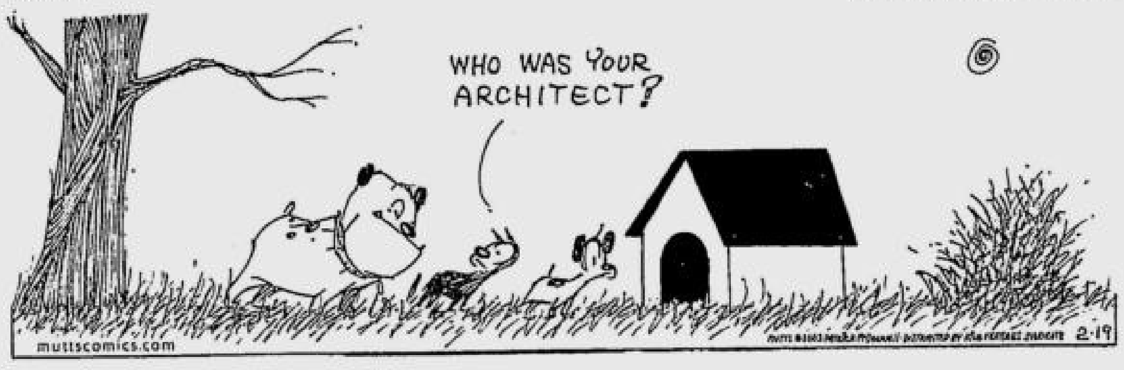
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


MY MOMMY SAYS YOU SHOULDN'T HOLD ON TO HANDRAILS AT PUBLIC PLACES.
THEY'RE FULL OF GERMS.
AIK!
Boink!
Boink!
Boink!
Boink!
THE DOCTOR SAYS YOU HAVE A CONCUSSION, TWO BROKEN RIBS, TWO SPRAINED ANKLES...
...BUT NO GERMS.

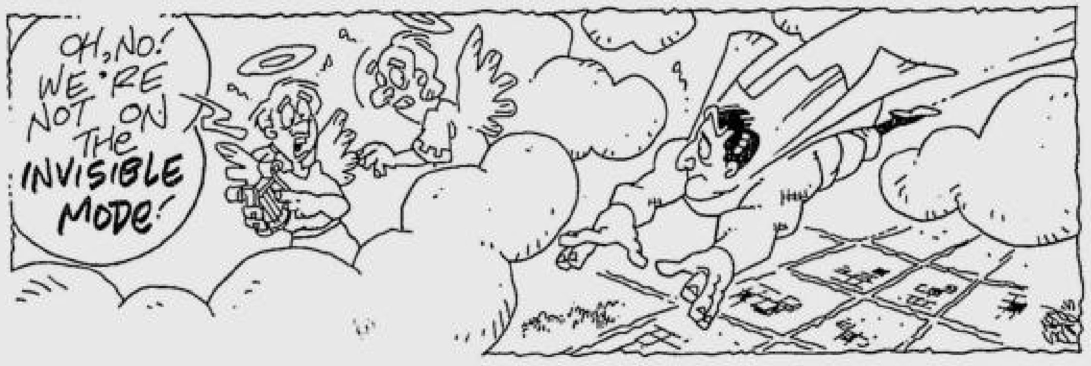
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


WHO WAS YOUR ARCHITECT?
muttscomics.com
2-19

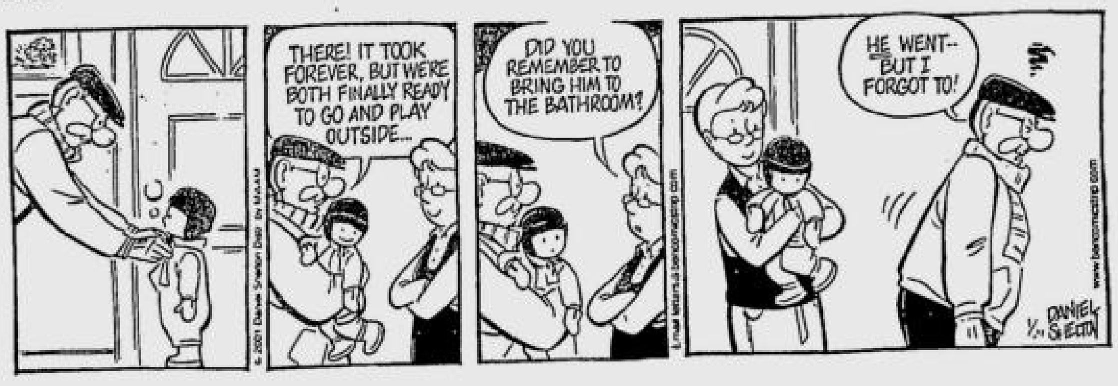
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


OH, NO! WE'RE NOT ON THE INVISIBLE MODE!

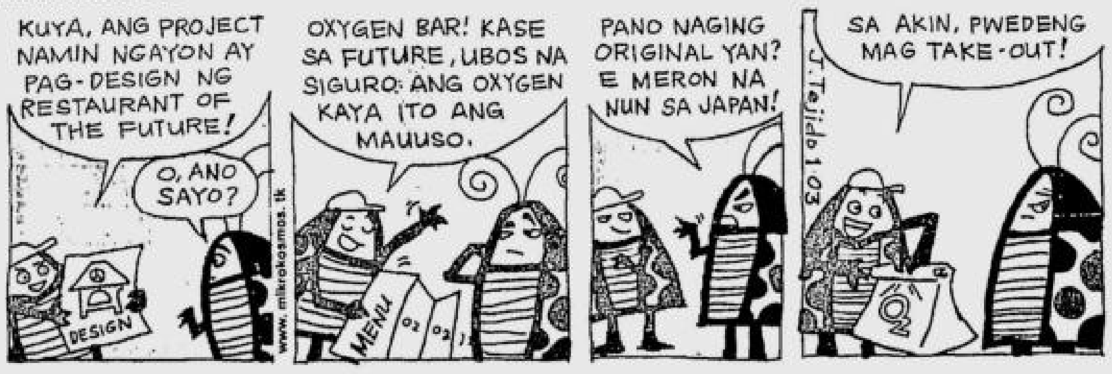
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


THERE! IT TOOK FOREVER, BUT WE'RE BOTH FINALLY READY TO GO AND PLAY OUTSIDE...
DID YOU REMEMBER TO BRING HIM TO THE BATHROOM?
HE WENT-- BUT I FORGOT TO!
www.bencomicstrip.com
DANIEL SHELTON

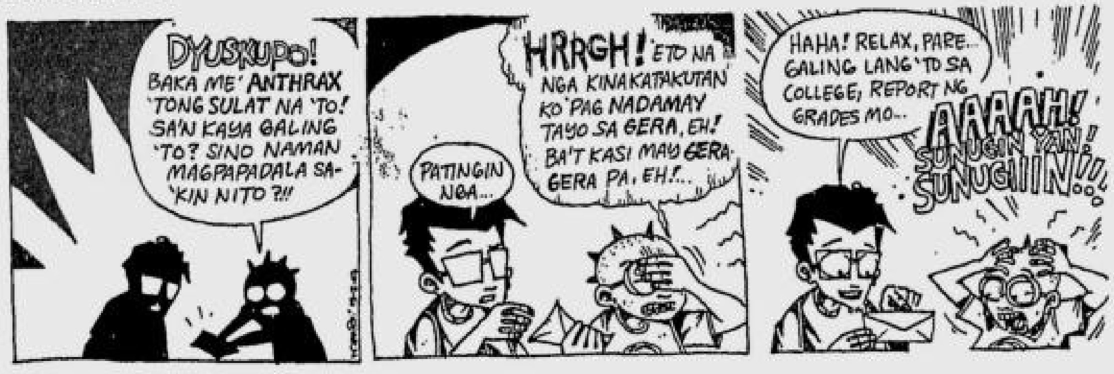
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


KUYA, ANG PROJECT NAMIN NGAYON AY PAG-DESIGN NG RESTAURANT OF THE FUTURE!
O, ANO SAYO?
DESIGN
OXYGEN BAR! KASE SA FUTURE, UBOS NA SIGURO ANG OXYGEN KAYA ITO ANG MAUUSO.
MENU
www.mikrokosmos.tk
PANO NAGING ORIGINAL YAN? E MERON NA NUN SA JAPAN!
J. Tejido 1.03
SA AKIN, PWEDENG MAG TAKE-OUT!
O2

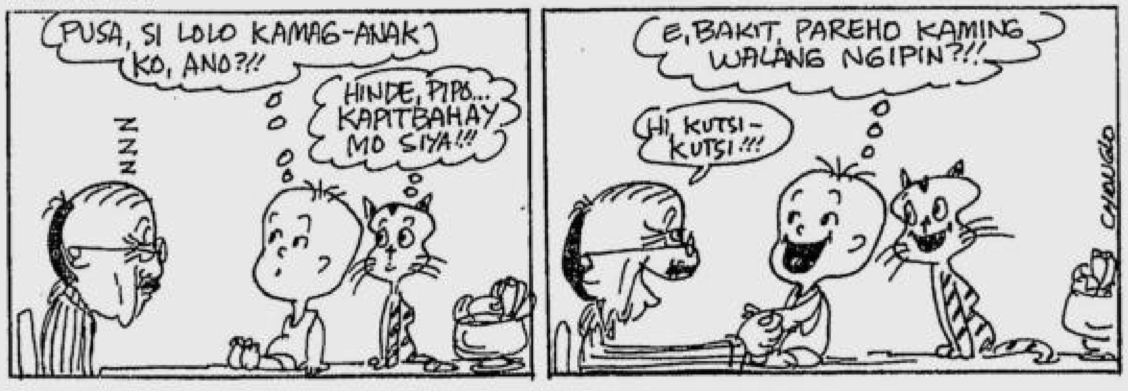
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


DYUSKUPO! BAKA ME' ANTHRAX 'TONG SULAT NA 'TO! SA'N KAYA GALING 'TO? SINO NAMAN MAGPAPADALA SA-'KIN NITO?!!
PATINGIN NGA...
HRRGH! ETO NA NGA KINAKATAKUTAN KO 'PAG NADAMAY TAYO SA GERA, EH! BA'T KASI MAY GERA-GERA PA, EH?!...
HAHA! RELAX, PARE.. GALING LANG 'TO SA COLLEGE, REPORT NG GRADES MO...
AAAAH! SUNUGIN YAN! SUNUGIIIN!!!

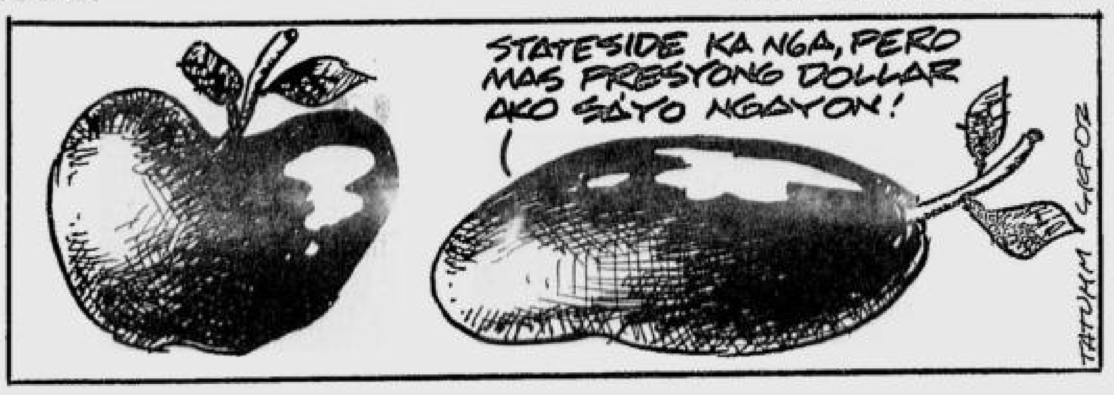
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


PUSA, SI LOLO KAMAG-ANAK KO, ANO?!!
ZZZ
HINDE, PIPO... KAPITBAHAY MO SIYA!!!
E, BAKIT, PAREHO KAMING WALANG NGIPIN?!!
HI, KUTSI-KUTSI!!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


STATESIDE KA NGA, PERO MAS PRESYONG DOLLAR AKO SAYO NGAYON!
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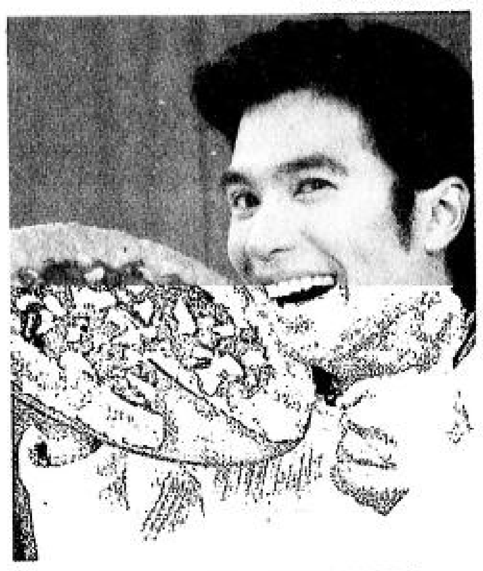


STUFFED CRUST PIZZA FOR 2

Pizza Hut's Stuffed Crust Pizza is now in a size that's good for two. When Pizza Hut introduced the Stuffed Crust Pizza in 2000, it was only available in one size: family. It became a best-selling menu favorite but with a size good for four.

Stuffed Crust Pizza is eaten backwards because its crust is filled with imported mozzarella cheese that is baked with garlic butter.

More good news is that the well-loved Cheesy Crust Pizza and the Double Stuffed Crust Pizza also come in a size for two.

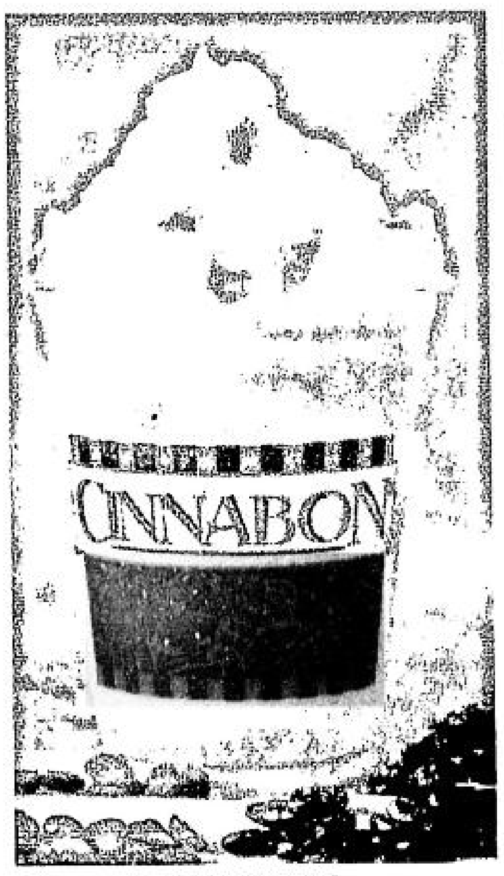
Cheesy Crust is a favorite for real cheese fans with its cheese on the inside, outside and top! For those who want a meaty bite, Double Stuffed Crust is stuffed with the creamy mozzarella cheese and pepperoni slices in its crust.

New
P10 only
Cheesy Twirl Crunch

CRUNCHY AND CHEESY COOL DESSERT

Jollibee introduces another offering to add a sweet note to its 25th anniversary celebration—a new crunchy, creamy and cool dessert called the Jolly Cheesy Twirl Crunch. Enjoy the rich ice cream goodness of vanilla dipped in cheese coating and topped with rice crispies and real cheese bits.

This is an addition to Jollibee's wide array of desserts. The dessert menu was first introduced in 1988 to give customers a truly complete and satisfying dining experience. The initial Choco Sundae became an instant favorite. This was followed by well-loved treats like Peach Mango Pie, Buko Piña Pie and Swirly Bitz—a thick and creamy ice cream dessert with Cookies n' Cream flavor. The Jolly Cheesy Twirl Crunch is one of Jollibee's two choices of yummy soft-serve ice creams, the other being the Jolly Choco Twirl Crunch.



SWIRLING SENSATIONS

Experience the passion of thick, dark espresso fused with fine white chocolate blended on ice with caramel and a generous helping of milk, from Cinnabon.

White Caramel Frappe captures the boldness of coffee complemented by the sweetness of white chocolate and rich caramel.

Available in all Cinnabon outlets: Power Plant Mall in Rockwell Center, Robinsons Galleria, Robinsons Place Manila, Shell-Magallanes, Shell Travel Plaza-South Luzon, Shell South Luzon-Select, Shell Travel Plaza-North Luzon, Shell North Luzon-Select, SM Megamall, The Podium, and soon, at Westgate Center, Shell C5-Taguig and Nala 3.

Stretch the value of your money

GLAD Wraps and Bags offers a few ways you can stretch the value of your peso while running a well-managed kitchen.

Marketing tips—Make a list of things you need before proceeding to the market or grocery. This helps prevent impulse-buying. With a list of things to buy, you won't have to make extra trips to the grocery—you save transportation money, time and energy.

Be on the lookout for promos, but before rushing to the market, check if you really need the goods.

Food buys, good buys—Make sure to buy fruits and vegetables in season because they are generally of better quality and cost. Think hard about purchasing goods that are on sale because you might end up with food you don't really need. Buying discounted but damaged produce may not be cost-effective in the long run as they might go bad fast in your fridge and end up in the waste bin.

Most of the time, it is cheaper to buy in bulk but you need to guard against over-stocking. Sometimes, there isn't enough storage space to properly keep them. Vegetables and fruits can be kept crisp and fresh longer in Glad Storage Bags inside a fridge.

Packed snack—Packed lunches and snacks are a good way to save money and guarantee the quality and nutritional value of the food. Try to include raw vegetables and fruits in your family's *baon*, as well as water, milk or fruit juices. If you don't want to discover a barely-eaten sandwich in your kid's lunchbox, take time out to creatively plan his packed lunch. Make sure to use Glad Sandwich Bags so your kid's sandwich stays fresh and flavorful until recess or lunch time.

Use leftovers whenever possible—Leftover chicken can be made into a tasty sandwich *baon* for your spouse. Other leftover food items can be made into desserts, soups and sauces. All it takes is a little imagination and practice. In time, you will be able to whip up marvelous meals out of leftovers! To keep leftover food from spoiling and to keep them flavorful, cover bowls and containers using sturdy Glad Cling Wrap or Glad Aluminum Foil.

Appliance reliance—Take special care of your kitchen appliances. For instance, hot food should be allowed to cool before placing in the fridge so as not to overwork the refrigerator. You can save energy by making sure your freezer door gasket seals properly. Use thick, high-grade Glad Freezer Bags when storing meat and poultry to prevent cross-contamination. These bags have a write-on strip for easy identification so you won't have to leave the fridge door open longer than necessary.

If you're bent on pursuing an honest-to-goodness austerity plan in the kitchen, make sure to audit your expenses to track your progress. This will tell you if you are spending too much on certain items and help you reduce your spending.

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